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STRIVE AND THRIVE.

A TALE..

BY MARY HOWITT,

AUTHOR OF "WHO SHALL BE GREATEST?" "HOPE ON! HOPE
EVER!" "SOWING AND REAPING," ETC. ETC.

443 & 445 BROADWAY.
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STRIVE AND THRIVE.

CHAPTER I.

NEIGHBOUR'S GOSSIP.

‘THAT poor man over the way is dead at last,’ said the younger of the two Miss Poindens, as they sate at breakfast.

“How do you know that?” returned the elder.

“They did not take the roll this morning,” answered Miss Barbara; “I saw the baker put it back into his basket; and that tall, thin girl has not dusted the window-frames; nor has that pale-faced boy fetched the spring-water, as usual; nor have the blinds been drawn up; and the sash of the sick chamber has been raised a matter of three inches. I am sure he is dead. It would but be neighbourly to send over and inquire if we could be of any service.”

“Barbara!” exclaimed Miss Poinden, as if

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quite shocked and astonished; "and what concern is it of ours if the man be dead or alive?"

"Sister," replied the more benevolent Barbara, "they are poor; very poor, I am sure they are. I have studied the ways of those people as if they were my own kindred; I know they are poor: and relations or friends they have none, for there never was going or coming to that house, nor have they had as much as a neighbour to take tea with them; and yet how respectable they all look; those children—and there are five of them—always so neat, and with a something about them so unlike common people's children; the boys with their clean white collars—but they always take them off as soon as they get within doors—I've seen it scores of times! Bless me! I've sate and fretted myself if it came on rain while they were out, as if they had been my own children, and I had to pay for their washing. Of course I know nothing of them further than I have seen," continued Miss Barbara, talking on in a weak, pattering voice, that might have reminded an unaccustomed listener of quiet rain against the window; "but, you know, when one has seen a thing for some time, one can make a shrewd guess respecting it. Now, I maintain it, that although these people are poor—which is a common lot enough—

yet that they are not common people. The house **itself** is a miracle to me ;—always so clean and neat as it looks ; and yet there is no servant, not even a girl, nor a char-woman on a Saturday ;—how they manage is past my skill to say ; one would think fairies did the work of the house. Look only at their street-door—there is not a door like it : paint clean, knocker bright, steps as white as a lily ; yet, never did I see a hand upon them. It is my opinion that all this is done when everybody else is in bed : and they would not have that sensibility if they were your common people. I declare I feel quite a regard for them. They take in needle-work, poor things, and that's money hardly earned. I've seen the draper's porter bring Irish linen there—I am sure it was Irish ; and it is my opinion that they work for warehouses ; and the boy takes home the work in a carpet-bag every Saturday morning. I was a long time before I could understand things—that carpet-bag puzzled me much ; but I have a pretty good knowledge of all their movements now. They are respectable people, sister ; very respectable people, though they are poor. I think I shall just send Martha over with my or our compliments, and ask if we could be of any service—it would but be neighbourly, you know."

" Nonsense !" returned Miss Poinden ; " I beg

you will do no such thing. Half a dozen people may be dead in the street beside this man, yet it is no concern of ours."

Poor Miss Barbara always yielded to her sister, and therefore she did not urge the point, although she thought within herself, that it was very disagreeable never to have her own way.

"He must have been ill many years," said Barbara, after a silence of five minutes, during which time the circumstances of the opposite neighbours had passed in busy review before her.

"The man over the way?" inquired Miss Poinden, who had thought in the meantime on twenty different subjects, and yet who, accustomed to her sister's unwearying perseverance in one train of thought, naturally reverted to the last topic of discourse—"perhaps he may."

"He *has*," persisted Miss Barbara; "why, it is three years last July since he came—don't you remember? Last July three years they brought him in a sedan-chair, and he then was too ill to walk. Three years it is since they came; those dressy Martins—Mrs. Martin and her three daughters—lived there before them. You had your lavender silk the very May before they left, and no sooner had you been seen in it, than Mrs. Martin got one like it."

"Going on for four years since I bought my

lavender silk! It is impossible!" exclaimed Miss Poinden.

"It will be four years next May," returned Barbara, quietly, "since you bought that dress."

"If you can make that out, the dress shall be yours," said the elder sister; and Barbara, who, unfortunately for the indulgence of her benevolent impulses, was dependent upon her senior, and who was the grateful receiver of her more costly cast-off habiliments, set about proving that the poor opposite neighbour had been ill in that house upwards of three years, inasmuch as he had been the succeeding tenant to the dressy Martins in whose time the lavender silk was unquestionably bought.

"Now I can prove it to you past a doubt," said Miss Barbara, settling herself into a talking position in her chair: "they came here on the first of July—that was your birthday, you know. I daresay they took the house at Midsummer, but perhaps he was too ill to be moved; I hope, however, they had not another quarter's rent to pay; or perhaps they were in lodgings by the week—then it wouldn't matter. Well, however, as I said, they came on the first of July, and he was brought in a sedan-chair. I was standing at that window, dusting the old china on the stand;

for, as it was your birthday, we were going to **have** company. We had the Smiths and the Wilsons that night to tea and supper. Young Wilson was over then from Barbadoes, and we asked the Smiths to meet them. Well, as I said, I was dusting the china; I had my Jemmy Jessamy in my hand wher the sedan-chair came up, and I was naturally curious to know who it held, for the goods had come the day before—no great quantity of them either—and that pale-faced boy walked beside the sedan; he was a very little fellow then; and Mrs. Walsingham, though at that time I didn't know her name, came out to the door to receive them. The chairman carried out the sick man, wrapped in a blanket, and presently I saw him brought into the chamber where he now lies dead. He must have been very ill at that time, for he has kept his chamber ever since, and his bed also, in my opinion, for I never saw him more than once or twice, and that at distant intervals, sitting in an easy chair near the fire. It was some incurable malady—some slow consumption or other—that has been the death of him; for, though a doctor came now and then, just at regular times, I never could see that any physick **came** to the house. But, however, all this is **nothing** to the purpose; I was telling you about

their first coming. I was very busy looking at them, and put my hand back to set the Jemmy Jessamy on the stand, that I might go nearer to the window, for I didn't care to be seen dusting it as I stood there; but unfortunately I forgot that I had moved the stand, so instead of setting it down as I expected, I dropped it on the floor."

"Just like you," chimed in Miss Poinden, in rather a bitter tone.

"Well, well, sister," continued Miss Barbara, with a deprecating voice, "my accidents mostly fall on my own head, as in this case, for, as I told you at the time, it was my own piece; and, seeing I have no great possessions, I had most cause to grieve: and then Mrs. Smith—just like her—asked where the Jemmy was, the moment she entered the room, for she catalogues everything in everybody's house. And didn't you wear your lavender silk that night; and Mr. Wilson, the old gentleman, dropped his muffin, with the buttered side downward, on the side-breadth; and old Mr. Smith told you that magnesia was the best thing in the world to take out grease? O, I remember it as if it were only to-night! and that was the day the people over the way first came; and I declare I never saw any one of them for a long time afterwards, without feeling as if I had just broken something."

"To be sure," said the elder lady, "I did wear that dress that particular night; it was new just then: but that cannot be three years ago."

"Well," returned Miss Barbara, "you'll see. Your next birthday you spent at Margate; the next, you had that fit of lumbago, when Mr. Baillie sent in that large bill: bless me, what money those doctors must get! I don't wonder at the poor Walsinghams having the doctor only now and then. Last first of July, don't you remember sitting in the morning for your picture, and our drinking tea with the Phillippses in the evening? Now there are three birthdays for you; and that makes three years, to my knowledge, that that poor man has kept his sick-bed; and next May your lavender silk gown will be four years old."

"Bless me," said Miss Poinden, "how time goes on! That gown looks well for its age; it was a good silk to begin with—seven-and-six-pence a-yard; but it is time you had it: and, now I think of it, I am rather tired of it. It will make you an excellent church-going dress when you've turned it."

Poor Miss Barbara, though she was two-and-fifty years old, was so pleased and so occupied with the business of re-modelling the lavender silk dress, that she said no more about sending Martha

with her compliments over the way, or **with** her offers of service; but yet, in the midst of her sewing and shaping, she could not help wondering how poor Mrs. Walsingham would contrive to put herself, and all those five children, into decent mourning.

Miss Barbara Poinden was quite right in most, if not all of her surmises. She was right in believing that Walsingham was dead—that he had died that night, after a long confinement to a sick chamber. She was right in saying that they were poor; that there was no coming nor going of relations or friends to their door, nor neighbourly tea-drinkings, and yet that they had a respectable look—a something about them unlike common people. She was right as to the needle-work and the street-door; and, as neither servant nor char-woman could be afforded in that house, had Miss Barbara been an early riser, she might have seen that the fairy who cleaned the steps and the knocker was no other than the thin, pale-faced boy who had so often excited her compassion.

But as Miss Barbara's observations only served for a breakfast-table gossip, and were only the **result** of an idle though kind-hearted curiosity, **we**, who know all the detail of the family history,

must enlighten our readers thereon; and, in order to do that thoroughly, we must go back nearly twenty years.

CHAPTER II.

NEIGHBOUR'S GOSSIP ILLUSTRATED.

NEARLY twenty years ago, Walsingham had just left college. He was a man of fine taste and accomplishments; that is, he had received a classical education; he read and discussed modern literature and the *belles lettres*, and was not only a connoisseur in the arts of music and painting, but an amateur practitioner of them also. He sketched excellently; he played on the flute and violin more than passingly well; and was, in fine, in the opinion of all his family, a most elegant young man. Add to these other attractions, that he possessed six thousand pounds in the funds, at his own disposal, and, better still, that he was the undoubted heir of a rich uncle, and it will be easily seen that the world gave its golden opinions not without reason. To his uncle, who was an old bachelor, he was the nearest of kin, and had

been brought up by him from his earliest childhood. The good old man, in fact, had been to him "father and mother both," and, as he advanced from childhood, had spared no expense to give him every advantage of education.

Too much money, however, had been spent, and too much indulgence allowed, if Mr. Thompson (for such was the uncle's name) expected that at his one-and-twentieth year he "would buckle to," as he expressed it, and take the place of head clerk in the soap-boiling establishment, even with the whole concern in reversion. Matters fell out as might have been expected: the nephew thought trade vulgar, and his uncle an unreasonable, if not a tyrannical old man, who expected him to sit down to ledgers and invoices punctually at ten o'clock daily, Sundays and Saint-days only excepted. He declared decidedly, that he should not do it; and that, if the prosperity of the soap-boiling concern depended upon him, it might go to ruin. The uncle thought the nephew an idle, ungrateful, good-for-nothing fellow, whose mind was given up to operas and plays, to picture-painting and fiddling, and to idle books, that were only written to turn weak heads. He was cruelly deceived; and such ingratitude, he said, could never bring a blessing.

Poor Mr. Thompson! he felt the disappointment even deeper than his words expressed. Walsingham had been as a son to him; he had toiled for him and thought for him, and had been destined, even from his birth, for his worthy and superior successor. The young man for the last several years had lived mostly at college; his mind had been occupied partly by study, but more by pleasure, and he soon learned that life went on merrily without his uncle. The uncle, on the contrary, never lost the memory of his ward; every scheme in business, every accumulation of wealth, had reference to him; and when, during the last half year of his college life, the good soap-boiler enlarged his warehouses, refitted and modernized his counting-house, and had his old-fashioned, dingy dwelling in Fore Street trimmed up, as it never had been, trimmed up before, all was done with an eye to the comfort and credit of his nephew. No wonder was it, therefore, that that nephew's contempt of trade was a most severe blow: he doubted if his senses, indeed, conveyed true intelligence; he had no conception of such consummate folly. The younger kinsman, however, conceded so far as to make an attempt at book-keeping, but six months more than sufficed to satisfy both parties: he smoked cigars, which

were the old man's abomination, while he posted the ledger; he made crooked ees instead of the good, old-fashioned, round-backed ones; and although his handwriting was naturally a good, clear, bold, tradesman's hand, he wrote a hurried, unintelligible scrawl, which would have disgraced a nobleman. The two, therefore, parted, and with less regret on the senior's part than if this trial had not been made.

Walsingham was his own master. He made a tour on the continent; he joined a grouse-shooting party in Scotland; and in the third summer after leaving his uncle, having seen him but seldom, and then casually, during that time, he set out on a pedestrian fishing ramble to some of the fishing streams in England. In the pleasant little town, or rather village, of Ashford-in-the-Water, in Derbyshire, where he had located himself for trout-fishing, in the delicious little river Wye, he became acquainted with a gentleman and her daughter, of the name of Hammond. Walsingham had never been much captivated by fashionable beauties, for they were too much of his own stamp to excite great interest in his heart. But sweet Margaret Hammond—more beautiful than the most admired beauty of a London season—with so much simplicity with so much good

sense, with so much information—where **might** there be one to compare with her? There was a wonderful fascination about her: with the utmost self-possession and maidenly quietness there was a *naïveté*, a piquancy, an indescribable something in her manner and conversation, that won all hearts; she was accomplished, too, but her accomplishments were the last thing thought of. Margaret, however, was not rich—in the world's estimation she was poor. She had eight hundred pounds to her portion, and her mother, who was a widow, was dependent on a small annuity. Nevertheless, they knew no wants, because their desires were bounded by their means; and those means, managed with admirable economy, seemed to extend as by a miracle.

Walsingham went no further that summer than Ashford-in-the-Water, and the next spring he again returned. The young people became extremely attached to each other, and Mrs. Hammond placed no impediment in the way of their marriage. He was candid in telling all that related to himself; he told of his uncle's early kindness and devotion to him, and of his earnest desire that he should enter into trade: he even told how the good old man, who had a horror of bricklayers and carpenters, had admitted them **into**

his den for the sake of his comfort, and had even pulled down and builded up, and offended **his** own love of ancient dinginess, to make the counting-house more attractive to him ; and yet, that all had failed of its purpose. Margaret did not laugh at this relation, as he intended she should, but she asked him why he had done so ? for that, to her mind, his conduct was selfish and ungrateful. Perhaps he was startled by her plain speaking ; perhaps he was conscious that there was truth in it. However that might be, as he now seriously intended to marry, he thought it worth while to make up matters with his uncle. The old gentleman was upwards of sixty years of age ; and, considering that he was the nearest kinsman, and that, after all, he owed him some duty, it was worth while to conciliate him, supposing him really affronted, even at the expense of sitting down punctually to day-books and ledger.

Margaret could not analyze all her lover's private reasoning, but, giving him credit for every pure and noble motive, her own good heart sincerely blessed him.

Mr. Thompson, habited as usual, in his brown coat, buff waistcoat, kerseymere small-clothes, **and** neatly-blackened and buckled shoes, was sitting **at his** desk, within a sort of large glass cage, that

occupied an angle of his spacious counting-house, when his nephew, with a non-chalant air, presented himself before him. The old gentleman raised his head from the large ledger on which he had been poring, and, adjusting his spectacles to the proper angle for transacting business by word of mouth, beheld his unexpected nephew.

The monosyllable "so" greeted his ear the first moment his uncle's eyes glanced upon him, but in the next his hand was involuntarily stretched forth, and his own grasped with the most cordial welcome. Walsingham's heart was really touched by this undoubted proof of kindness, and at the same moment he was shocked to see the pallid, thin countenance of his uncle : the old man had evidently been ill.

Mr. Thompson did not conceal the pleasure he had in again meeting his nephew ; and when, as the two sate prolonging to an unusual time the leisure the old gentleman allowed for his solitary glass of after-dinner port, Walsingham announced his wish to make himself useful in business, declaring that he was satisfied with gentlemanly indolence, and would now become the plodding tradesman, the good old man was overjoyed ; he declared it was the happiest day of his life ; that he would have the back bed-room new

papered, and new moreen hangings to the bed, and that he should be lodged like a prince. Unfortunately, that was not what Walsingham intended; but as he feared the old bachelor's aversion to marriage might throw some impediment in his way, he kept his own counsel, and merely replied, that he should prefer choosing his own lodgings, and that he would not trouble his uncle to make any domestic alterations for him. Mr. Thompson would have thought nothing trouble that secured his nephew to himself, and he was therefore thrown quite a-back by this repulse. "So, my house is not good enough for him—my way of living does not please him," muttered he to himself, as he put on his slippers that evening: and next morning Walsingham found his uncle considerably abated in cordiality. There were many stipulations now to be made before he would agree to receive him even into his counting-house. In the first place, he must be punctual; "to the minute, sir," said the senior, with emphasis: Walsingham promised. He must never smoke a cigar in the counting-house; he must write a good, round, legible, *tradesman's* hand: he promised, without hesitation. Further, the old gentleman approved neither of play-books, play-houses, operas, nor fiddling; and if his nephew

expected important advantages from him, he too expected some little concessions. Walsingham thought his uncle ignorant and unreasonable, but he was in no humour to stand upon trifles; and therefore he again promised. No indulgence, he said, of his own pleasures or private tastes, should interfere with his duty to his uncle.

Mr. Thompson gave his hand, and said it should be a bargain, and that in one month from that day he would expect him to be at his post.

Walsingham passed what he thought a happy fortnight in London, and then went down to Ashford, intending to spend the remainder of his time with Margaret. He had left all bright and hopeful but a short time before; on his return he found that a fearful change had occurred: Mrs. Hammond had been visited by a paralytic stroke, and Margaret was overwhelmed by sorrow and anxiety.

Walsingham, on his part, had nothing but good to communicate. He was, he believed, secure of his uncle's affections; he had a prospect of wealth before him, and, with him, for Margaret also. Mrs. Hammond's faculties were unimpaired by her severe visitation; but as the physician was apprehensive of another attack, which he feared might be fatal, the one earnest desire of her heart was

now to see her daughter united to Walsingham; which she urged incessantly, and with almost childish impatience. Walsingham seconded her wishes with an urgency that would take no denial. Margaret alone hesitated; but her hesitation was overruled, and her marriage took place but a few days before her mother's death.

CHAPTER III.

MARRIED LIFE.

THE day after Mrs. Hammond's funeral was that on which Walsingham was bound to return to his uncle. Margaret insisted on his punctually keeping his appointment; but this she could only persuade him to by accompanying him to town. Walsingham, however, did not keep his appointment; he was one day and three hours after his time—a serious delinquency in the eyes of his kinsman. A very different countenance to that of their late interview now met him; and Walsingham ventured not to make the excuses of either of the men in the Gospel, that he had to bury the

dead, or that he had married a wife, and could not come. He took the unoccupied seat by his uncle, whose only salutation to him was, that there would be double duty for him to-day, seeing he had neglected that of the day before.

It seemed an interminable day to Walsingham: he grew out of humour, bit his pen, and thought, that of all drudgery under the sun, that of head-clerk in a soap-boiler's office was the most irksome, even with the whole business in reversion. Margaret's first day in London, too—spent in a small room at the Bull-and-Mouth, Aldersgate-street—was melancholy enough. It was seven o'clock before her husband returned, and he then proposed their spending the evening at the opera: but she was in no spirits for the opera; and, late as it was for such a quest, she prayed him to let them seek for quiet lodgings, that, at least in his absence, she might have some feeling of home-comfort. Their quest was unsuccessful; and, as Walsingham did not rise early enough to go out before he went to the counting-house, after four joyless days spent at an hotel, she determined to go down to Ashford, wind up all their little affairs there, and leave her husband in the meantime to provide a house for them.

“ We need not go through the melancholy detail

of the busy three weeks which Margaret spent at her old but now desolate home. After packing up their good store of old-fashioned, respectable plate, linen, and china, and selecting from their well-kept furniture what she thought would be most useful to them in their new housekeeping, the rest was sold, a farewell was taken of her friends, and she returned to London. To her surprise she was introduced by her husband into a small but elegant villa, in the pleasant neighbourhood of Highgate, as her future home. It seemed all like magic: the rooms so light and cheerful, the views so delicious; the neat gay garden, with its trim lawn and abundant ever-greens, looking so verdant and refreshing; all her wants and wishes studied, and even her domestic comforts thought for. It was better than any magic—it was the forethought of an affectionate heart.

“ Oh, Edward, how kind, how considerate!” exclaimed she, glancing round, with an emotion at her heart that filled her eyes with tears; “ this is, indeed, like coming into Paradise!”

He was not less pleased than his wife; he had intended her an agreeable surprise, and such it had proved.

Walsingham, as we have said, had fine taste;

he had a passion for the beautiful, and, in consequence, considerable knowledge of the fine arts. He loved music; he purchased pictures and expensive casts; life lost half its charm to his mind, without the enjoyment of these things. Poor Mrs. Walsingham had a practical lesson, only a few days after her arrival at Highgate, how inferior her tastes and notions were to those of her husband.

"What is all this old lumbering rubbish brought here for?" exclaimed he, as he saw the furniture which Margaret had left to come by the waggon, and which had now arrived, brought into his hall. "Where does this brokers' rubbish come from?" again asked he, as his wife came down stairs, eager to empty the drawers of the old linen and plate which she had so carefully packed in them.

"It is some of mother's furniture," replied she, "which I thought might be useful to us."

"To us!" repeated he, disdainfully; "I would not give such lumber house-room! Such things as these are inadmissible in a modern house!"

"I did not think our house would have been as elegant as this; and, besides, dear Edward, I thought of saving us expense."

"The deuce you did!" was his impatient re

ply: the first time he had spoken impatiently to her. "You ought to consult me about such things, for you are not to be trusted in matters of taste. These things are not even antique!"

Margaret was mortified; and she stood with the handle of a drawer between her fingers, forbearing to open it, lest her husband should discover some additional cause of displeasure. An additional cause of displeasure, however, stood before him in a chest of books—the small library of Margaret's mother—the old binding and dingy gilding of which made it unsightly to his eyes.

"It is really too bad, Margaret," said he, "to fill the house with these worthless things; had you put them in the sale they might have brought their value; as it is, they are valueless here."

"Not to me," returned his wife: "and have you forgotten, Edward, the pleasure we have had in reading these very books?"

"One might endure to read them at Ashford," said he, "where all things corresponded, but here I could not touch them."

In the evening, when her husband returned from the counting-house, all the offensive old furniture was removed from sight; not a straw nor a piece of matting remained; nor even a china jar, nor an antiquated piece of plate, was in sight, to

recall the annoyance of the morning. All had been carefully put away, and the old furniture stowed into an unfurnished chamber—not without an involuntary and depressing thought that, perhaps, a time might come when even these despised articles should stand them in stead.

Time went on—children were born to them—and, to all appearance, this little villa at Highgate was a happy home: it was so to Mrs. Walsingham, with one or two drawbacks. Her husband's lavish expenditure, his unabated dislike to all the details of trade, and the coldness and disunion which now existed between himself and his uncle, were her saddest causes of anxiety.

Mr. Thompson had found his nephew a very indifferent substitute for his old regular head-clerk; his want of punctuality and business-like precision reduced the old man's patience to the strength of a burnt thread. Frequent dissensions occurred between them; still the one forbore and forgave, and the other promised amendment, and even attempted it; but still they met upon the fertile ground of difference, and no sympathy nor confidence existed between them.

In all this time Mrs. Walsingham was unknown to her husband's uncle. Mr. Thompson soon learned that his nephew had taken to himself a

wife: but after his first ebullition of anger was over, the subject was never started by either, although now and then, when some gleam of better intelligence passed over them, Walsingham would quietly hint that a visit from his uncle would give his wife pleasure. So it would; for Mrs. Walsingham had soon learned, even from her husband's complainings, to understand the character of his uncle; and her earnest wish had always been, that they might be acquainted.

"Only bring us acquainted," said she to her husband one day, "and all will be well. I understand the old gentleman's character far better than you do, and I respect many of his prejudices. I could make you also understand, and, perhaps, like each other."

Walsingham burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"But, at all events, dearest husband," continued she, "endeavour to please him. If he chooses to have his safes unlocked, and his books opened, precisely at ten, he is perfectly right in requiring it; and if he forbids a cigar to be smoked in his glass house, neither you nor any other person ought to do it; and if he does think that a man who gets his own living has no right to make crooked ees, for henceforth and for ever,

D

in his books, at least, let every e be straight. You would conciliate him at once, by humouring him in these harmless little fancies.

Walsingham persisted that his wife talked of what she did not understand.

"This, at least, I understand," she replied; "he behaved as the most affectionate of fathers in your younger days; some obedience and some gratitude, therefore, you surely owe him. It would be a small thing to *try*, at least, to please him—for the sake of your children, dearest Edward, do it!"

Walsingham was moved, and promised that he would even try.

"And though," continued his wife, "he may have refused your former invitations, still invite him again; not with that cold, measured voice of yours, but with a kind, cordial voice, as if your heart went with your invitation; and I am sure he will come. I think he would like me, and I have made up my mind to like him."

Walsingham put, as he thought, his heart into his words, and invited the old gentleman, but he again refused. He thought of the invitation afterwards, however, again and again; and after it had revolved in his mind for about six months, he thought, all at once, that he would go—that

he would drop in quite unexpectedly, for that was the true way of seeing people as they were.

A few more pages, however, we must be allowed, before we relate Mr. Thompson's very momentous visit.

"I'll have that old tea-service of your mother's exchanged for modern," said Walsingham one evening, after a little party had left them; "it is neither modern nor antique, and I cannot bear the style of it—I must have it exchanged."

"By no means," said his wife, "for I have a strong attachment to that old tea-service; I remember it from the time when I was a child—before my father died—when we had that faithful old servant that I have told you of."

"But," said her husband, "you cannot tell everybody of your early attachments: you are quite a child, Margaret, about these things."

"Perhaps I am," said she; "but I must confess that I love to think of those times when mother had her tea-parties at six o'clock—they kept, then, such early hours in the country; and I wore a white frock and red shoes, and used to sit so demurely at her feet. Then that old tea-service was so carefully kept—it was always considered so very good—and, after father's death, we only used it now and then, on great occasions."

I remember we brought it out the first time you took tea with us. I remember it well—perhaps you don't."

Walsingham kissed his wife's cheek, and called her a little fool; adding, that spite of all her tender associations, the old tea-service must still be exchanged, and that he would call at the silver-smith's before long, and see about it."

"Wait, at least," said Mrs. Walsingham, "till we are assured of Mr. Thompson's good will; and, whatever we do, dearest Edward, let us be prudent."

These were unfortunate words for her to have spoken, and her husband's temper became ruffled. He held an opinion, which many men hold—and a very false, and often fatal opinion it is—that women have nothing to do with their husbands' incomes, further than managing their housekeeping, and purchasing clothes for themselves and their children. Mrs. Walsingham had always received from her husband what her good management and prudence made sufficient for this expenditure, but the real extent of his resources, or the state of his circumstances, she never was permitted to know. She saw no visible want of money: she knew that her husband was lavish in the indulgence of his tastes, and even in his

personal expenses; but as he repelled interference from her, she remained in passive ignorance. Poor Walsingham! this was his most fatal error, and the source of all his after sorrows. The truth was, that his yearly expenditure had long exceeded his income—his funded property had been sold, and much of the ornamental furniture of his house, his pictures, and various articles of *virtu*, which he was constantly exchanging, unpaid for. Of all this his wife knew nothing; and he, with his unbusiness-like habits, detested the very thought of looking into his affairs. These few remarks will prepare the reader for the chapter which is to follow.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. THOMPSON'S VISIT.

It was a fine evening, late in May, when the old gentleman took a turn up to Highgate. It was about six o'clock when he set out; he dined at one, and he now made up his mind for a comfortable "dish of tea" with his kinsfolk. It was

altogether a most unlucky time. Walsingham was going that evening with a gentleman to the opera, with whom he was also first to dine. He had returned from the counting-house in time to dress; and, as the evening was as deliciously fine as an evening on the verge of June could well be, Mrs. Walsingham, who had that day dined early with her children, had taken them out for a walk.

Walsingham, when he went to dress, emptied a quantity of loose papers out of the pocket of the coat he intended to wear, and laid them, with his new primrose-coloured gloves, his opera-ticket, and his opera-glass, upon the dining-room table.

While dressing, he was informed that an old gentleman wished to see him.

"I am engaged; I cannot see any one," was his reply: "but, stop—what name?"

"He gave no name, sir," replied the servant.

"What is he like?" asked Walsingham.

"An old gentleman, sir—rather like a tradesman."

His uncle was the last person in his mind; and the word *tradesman* suggested some unpleasant images to his mind, in the forms of sundry duns for unpaid bills.

"I cannot see any one," said Walsingham, impatiently.

Mr. Thompson had been asked to sit down in the dining-room; and in the meantime he took an attentive survey of everything, and saw much which, in the fit of ill-humour that was rapidly coming over him, he disapproved. "Very fine!" said he to himself; "I wonder whether all this is paid for."

The maid went into the kitchen to pin on a pink bow which had fallen from her cap, and, as she thought the "old tradesman" was in no hurry, she let him wait some time before she delivered her message. Mr. Thompson had ample time to complete his survey. "Upon my word!" said he, "an opera-ticket and glass!"

Completely out of humour by this time, and scarcely thinking what he was doing, except that it was his way at home, he took up paper after paper, and made himself master of their contents. They were sundry unpaid bills, letters of duns, and other such documents, which Walsingham had been careful in keeping from his wife's knowledge.

"An extravagant dog!" growled he, no longer able to control his anger, and reading aloud the subjects and totals of the four last bills—"Seven-and-thirty pounds, nineteen shillings, for a tailor's bill! fifteen pounds eighteen for horse-hire! seven guineas for the Graces—a group in plaster! thirty-

five pounds on the exchange of the silver tea-service!"—and, scarcely waiting for the assurance that Mr. Walsingham was engaged, and could see no one, the old gentleman flung out of the house more irritated against his nephew than he had ever been before.

All unconscious who had been the visitee, but convinced that it was some "dunning tradesman," from the maid's remark, that "he went off in a towering passion," he gathered up his unfortunate papers, the disarrangement of which he never observed, locked them in his desk, drew on his delicate gloves, pocketed his ticket and glass, and set off for an evening of pleasure.

Mrs. Walsingham enjoyed her walk—so did her children; the spirits of all seemed bright and cheerful as the sunny air they had been breathing, and, long after they had nestled down in their healthy slumbers, their mother's heart knew no feelings but those of thankfulness and pleasure.

Walsingham returned home in raptures of delight. Life, he declared, was not worth having without such pleasures as he had that night enjoyed. Catalani's singing, Desshayes' dancing—they were the very perfection of intellectual pleasure! Margaret thought that she had enjoyed sounder pleasure, perhaps, though less ostentatious,

in sitting by her sleeping children. She had no doubt, she said, of such pleasures as her husband spoke of being very delightful, very intellectual; but still they were not the only pleasures, nor the highest pleasures of life.

"You are so prudent, you are so measured in your approbation, you are so very domestic in your tastes," was his unsatisfied reply.

The next morning Walsingham felt a great reaction of spirits; he was not the excited, animated being of the last night; and it was with a weariness of mind and a thorough disgust of business that, an hour and a half after his time, he presented himself before his uncle. Here a reception awaited him for which he was not at all prepared.

"So, sir," began his uncle, "you make use of a silver tea-service!"

Walsingham was astonished; yet it was not without a smile that he replied he did.

"Sir," returned his uncle, "Britannia-metal or Sheffield plate, at least, might serve your turn. I am a man, sir, not worth less than a quarter of a million, yet I never had a silver tea-pot in my life. And you have spent seven guineas in three plaster women!—not seemly figures, any of them, to be in a decent man's house," continued he, as his nephew, utterly amazed at what this could mean, looked at him without a reply.

He then announced his last evening's visit, and, without permitting a word of apology or explanation, went on to state in what manner he had possessed himself of these facts.

Walsingham, who almost rejoiced, at the moment, in what seemed a plea against his uncle, declared his conduct to have been treacherous and mean; and that only in the most dishonourable manner had he possessed himself of these facts. He would rather, he declared, live on bread and water; he would rather pine in a jail, than tamely submit to conduct so ungentlemanly!

"As you please," was his uncle's unmoved reply.

Walsingham believed that he stood in the position of an injured man, and he was not cast down. His uncle pursued: "I called on you last evening with a disposition to establish a friendly feeling between us; but I saw enough to convince me that we hold such different principles, and take such different views of life, that the less intercourse between us the better. I will leave you uninterruptedly to walk in the path you have chosen. A man who will not pay his debts, a man who will sacrifice his own self-respect for the sake of indulging fancies that he calls *taste*, shall not have the encouragement of my countenance. Do not interrupt me, sir; your services have never

~~been~~ of any value to me; I have all along overpaid you, and henceforth I shall have my work done by those from whom I can have my money's worth. I am not the dishonourable being you represent me; the full amount of those unpaid bills, with which I became acquainted last night, you will find in this cheque. The less we see of each other, henceforward, the better." So saying, he left his nephew almost stupified by contending feelings. Was he injured by his uncle, or benefitted by him?—he scarcely knew which. He stood for a few moments undecided what to do next, and he might have remained undecided much longer, had not a clerk pushed past him, as he thought rudely, and for an instant diverted the current of his feelings.

He took up his hat and the cheque to which his uncle had pointed, and, without ascertaining its amount, hastened to the bank, presented it, and received a hundred and fifty pounds.

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT CHANGE.

WALSINGHAM put the money in his pocket, and determined that his wife should know nothing of this unpleasant affair. He had no fear but that in the end his uncle would pass all over; and, since he was now free from counting-house duties, why not enjoy a week's real relaxation? why not take his wife and children, this delicious weather, to spend a week at Richmond, at Windsor, or somewhere?

The little scheme of pleasure was soon arranged; his unlooked-for week of leisure made every home-inmate glad; and he, confident in his own mind that his uncle would relent, gave himself up to enjoyment, with an entire reaction of spirit that was perhaps neither unnatural nor strange. How happily that week at Richmond wore away!

"I am not bound to be back precisely to the week," said he, as the seventh day was accomplished, and with a secret reluctance to encounter again any disagreeable reality; "I am not bound

exactly to time; suppose we stay over the Sunday—just three days longer.” Every one joyfully acceded.

On the Sunday, as he and his wife were walking on the terrace, they were met by the gentleman who went with him to the opera on the unfortunate evening of his uncle's visit.

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed the gentleman, “*you* here!”

“And why not?” asked Walsingham, in a cheerful voice, yet not without a sudden chillness of heart.

“You have not heard, then?” said the other.

“Heard what?” asked he, alarmed.

“Of Mr. Thompson's death!—Good Heavens, that I should thus distress you!” added he, seeing the shock his words had produced upon both his hearers; “but it will be all the better for you, my dear fellow,” he said, laying his hand on Walsingham's arm, and meaning to act the comforter.

The gentleman's information was only too correct. Mr. Thompson had died whilst holding his pen in his counting-house the day before. The little party hurried to London immediately. At his house Walsingham found the announcement of his uncle's death; and on the next Thursday he was invited to attend the funeral, and hear the

reading of his will. He had not yet told his wife under what circumstances they had last parted; there would be no need now, he thought, if things were as he hoped, and as he almost expected.

Mr. Thompson's will was dated the day after their last interview, and was short, clear, and strong as words could make it. His business he ordered to be disposed of, and the whole of his property was left in bequests. Alms-houses were to be built, different institutions enriched, and a large amount given to various charities in the metropolis. A few annuities came last, to his old servants, male and female, to his oldest clerk, and to his nephew; one hundred pounds a year to the latter, and fifty pounds for funeral expenses.

This was a blow which crushed poor Walsingham to the earth. In the agony of his disappointment he opened his whole soul to his wife; he told of his uncle's strange visit, of the manner in which he had discovered his debts, of their last interview, and of the money which he had given him. Margaret shed bitter, heart-felt tears at this unexpected recital; she was amazed at the knowledge of their debts, at the amount of borrowed money, but above all, at the discovery that her husband's private resources, and her own small dowry, were alike dissipated. It was an

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she proposed her plans to him ; but day after day the poor man put away the idea from him. " When I am stronger," said he, " I will talk of these things!" But pitiless creditors would admit of no delay, and she again introduced the subject.

" I see clearly, dearest husband," said she, " the course which it is right for us to take: only allow me to guide us. We must part with all these expensive things—nay, do not shrink from me—admit but once this idea, and your mind will be reconciled to it. We must remove quite away from this place. We must begin life anew; and, please God we can pay all our debts, we shall yet do well. The true happiness of life does not alone consist in wealth."

Walsingham groaned aloud, for he could not conceive of happiness without wealth. His wife's heart bled for him, but she continued to lay down her systematic plans of reform.

" Do not urge me to do any thing in this detestable business," said he, in a voice half of petulance, half of distress: " let me only be absent, then you may do what you please."

Margaret hesitated to reply, and her husband went on.

" I have not the strength of mind which you have; I could not sweep away all the little

elegances and embellishments of life with **the** same indifference that you could. If I remained with you I should only be a hinderance: give me a fortnight's time to prepare my mind for this frightful change—for the fall from a gentleman's to a pauper's condition—and I will return, prepared for whatever arrangements you may have made."

"But, my love," urged his wife, with the greatest gentleness, "this morbid shrinking from unpleasant duty is only increasing your own difficulty. We must all exert ourselves as we have never done before. We shall be pennyless when all our debts are paid."

"I know it, I know it!" exclaimed the poor man, with an agony of distress which he could no longer command: "I am a weak, worthless incumbrance on society. I shall bring you all to beggary—those dear, dear children! and you, Margaret!" Walsingham covered his face with his hands, and wept. "You cannot conceive," at length he continued, "with your strong, calm mind, the extreme misery of mine! Do not ask me to face all the wretched detail of this needful change. I have lived here as a gentleman, and I will not be seen here as a bankrupt."

"No, no, not as a bankrupt," said his wife; "as an honest man who will pay every farthing he owes."

“ I cannot do it,” returned he ; “ and, if you love me, do not require it from me. I will go but for one fortnight—I care not how sordidly to live, where no one knows me—and in the meantime do just what you please ; I will harden my mind for the change, and we will sit down for the rest of our days humbled and poor.”

Margaret began to think with her husband, that she really was more capable of going through this disagreeable business than he was ; and that, in his present state of feeling, it was desirable to spare him the annoyance even of its petty details. She perceived, too, advantages in his absence ; for the very regret with which he would have parted with a picture, or some favourite piece of ornamental furniture, would have weakened her own resolution. Besides, his health and his mind had been so shaken of late, that the change of air and scene would benefit both. He should take Willy, the second child, now six years old, with him—he always was happy with his children—and, with the boy to occupy his attention, he would have no time for melancholy thoughts.

The next day all was ready. Willy was delighted with the prospect of another visit to the country, like that happy time at Richmond, and Walsingham, absolutely refusing to enter again upon the subject, gave his wife free permission to

do whatever she thought right: and, not even venturing a parting look at any of his possessions, and begging that in her letters she would not even hint of her progress, unless his presence were absolutely requisite, nor that she would even hint of where she intended them to remove, he and his child took the coach to Dorking, designing to spend their time in that delightful neighbourhood. He was to write at the end of the first week to their present home; and, as their future one was to remain unknown, it was agreed that on that evening se'nnight they were to meet punctually at six o'clock by the great gate of St. Paul's, whence Margaret was to conduct them to their new habitation.

How Mrs. Walsingham alone, and without counsellors, went through the business of these important two weeks, we need not relate at full. We will only say, that that elegant new tea-service which had given such displeasure to Mr. Thompson, and for which the old, associated as it was with the pleasant memories of Margaret's childhood, had been exchanged, was taken back by the silversmith, having a considerable allowance made for use. The Graces too, with another group, went back to their unpaid former proprietor; so did some of the pictures. Fortunately

it was well known that Walsingham was a man of great taste; and the circumstance of his uncle's will having excited some sympathy towards him, many of his pictures, and various articles of *virtu*, sold for even more than he had given for them. The landlord, too, was not an unreasonable man. He thought Mrs. Walsingham the very paragon of women;—so young and handsome, and yet to understand business so well; to have her senses about her for everything;—he wished all men had as much business-knowledge;—and yet she was quite a lady; could draw, and could play on the piano like an angel, as he had heard! She was, to be sure, one in a thousand! Such was the summing up of the good landlord's encomium, as he set out with a proposal to take the furniture off her hands, together with the house, which he, in future, would let furnished. Spite, however, of his admiration for her business-talents, he expected to get every thing at a considerable reduction, and to make a good bargain for himself; yet with these drawbacks she gladly assented, and thanked God that this formidable business had been made so easy to her.

As the house had been furnished in the most unsparing manner, she had the opportunity of reserving some of the least valuable articles; while

the whole of that stowed-away, despised old furniture, which she had brought from her mother's, was destined to be again useful. She was not, however, forgetful of her husband's sensitiveness on the score of elegance; and some few articles of luxury and taste she reserved especially for him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW HOME.

Mrs. WALSINGHAM, after all, found the result less appalling than she expected. When every demand was satisfied, and unexpensive lodgings furnished—for she would not venture again upon taking a house—a small surplus would yet remain with which to commence their humble house-keeping. A mountain's weight seemed at once removed from her mind, and she could not resist an expression of thankful joy when she wrote to her husband, even though it approached the forbidden topic.

She then took four rooms in the house of a respectable working watchmaker at Pentonville. The place altogether had a very reputable aspect;

the window-glass was good, and bright as hands could make it; the paint was clean, nor even the wall-papers inelegant; there was a light, well-looking staircase, and a private door. To her judgment the lodgings had much to recommend them, and she hoped her husband would feel no insuperable repugnance, nor disgust against them. What principally influenced her, however, in the choice, was the cheerful, healthful, honest countenances of the old couple to whom they belonged; countenances which bespoke good lives and good consciences.

She had dismissed her three servants on leaving Highgate, and, hiring a young woman, recommended by the watchmaker's wife, had her goods and chattels removed. Even she could not resist a very natural depression of spirits, a sort of weary foreboding of heart, as, with her three children, who had questioned her painfully as to these strange and melancholy changes, she lay down amid the disarrangements and discomforts of her half-furnished chamber. But with the morning's light came better and more hopeful feeling. The second week was wearing on, and there was no time to be lost. In many cases the very necessity for exertion both of body and mind is our greatest blessing; it was so with Mrs. Walsingham.

It was a long time before she could arrange and fit things to her own mind, so as to combine comfort and convenience with some little appearance of elegance. She herself had now many misgivings about the old furniture. Her husband had said truly, that it was neither modern nor antique. True it was well kept, and, in an old house in the country, it would have had a respectable look; it would have done very well in a country cottage, even *ornée*, but it certainly was less handsome than she had thought. It was bright, to be sure, but it was not French polish which had made it so;—it had been the daily watchfulness of her good mother's housewifely care; and she sighed to think, now that it was again come into use, she should neither have the time nor the means even to preserve its present state. The colour of the paper, also, in the sitting-room, did not accord with that of the only carpet she had been able to bring with her; and that, she knew, would annoy her husband: again, the windows, bright and good as the glass was, looked staring and naked, with only their white roller-blinds, to an eye accustomed to ample, well-hung curtains, stained glass, and venetian blinds. "Alas!" sighed she, "what mere trifles make it hard to descend into a lower estate!"

It was, however, of importance that her husband should not be depressed at the first moment, by any little deficiencies which she could supply, or defects which she could remedy. She therefore set herself again assiduously to work. A drab drugget, bound with crimson, would correct the carpet; and a little stand in that corner would fill an awkward blank: but the only stand she could spare for that purpose was ill-conditioned and hopelessly ugly. A crimson cloth, however, would not only conceal its defects, but would give character and cheerfulness to the room. Full, white muslin curtains, too, would sufficiently clothe the windows; and, as Walsingham liked those in their own drawing-room, these she would make like them.

Accordingly she set to work with all the zeal which a kind heart and a willing mind give to a ready hand; and, after expending about three pounds, and working the whole day, with the help of Mrs. Knivett, the good woman of the house, and her own two little girls, Mary and Grace, who threaded all their needles, waxed the thread, picked up pins, and ran little errands, had the satisfaction of seeing that the effect she desired was produced even beyond her hopes.

A recess at the end of the room had been fitted

up with shelves for books; but it was enclosed with heavy doors, painted in bad taste, to imitate different woods; these doors were a great annoyance to her—to her husband she knew they would be detestable. “If I could only have them away,” thought she, “I could fill the shelves with the best of the books. Even their dingy gilding would look better than those frightful doors, or the empty shelves.”

The doors were removed, and the shelves filled with the best-conditioned and brightest-looking of the books, carefully rubbed up, and arranged to the best advantage.

“What a blessing it is to have all these excellent books,” thought she to herself. “When these dear children grow a little older, what delight we shall have in reading them together! and even poor Edward too, how he would enjoy them, could he once get over the dingy paper and the old-fashioned types!”

“It will do!” exclaimed Margaret, when, after having finished all her little arrangements and improvements, she went out of the room, endeavouring to make herself a stranger to it, and came in again to have a general, and, as it were, a first view of the whole; “it will do excellently—even Edward will see nothing to displease him.”

It was in the same spirit, with the same attention to her husband's tastes and prejudices, that all her little arrangements were made.

"Well, you are the very cleverest lady that ever I knew!" said good Mrs. Knivett, when, at three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, the day which completed the fortnight, Mrs. Walsingham, who had finished all her operations, invited her to take a general survey.

"I think it all looks very nice, Mrs. Knivett," she said.

"Oh, it is like a palace, madam. And see all the forecast you have had to hide all the flaws! why, if I did not know where the broken places in the walls were, I should never find them out. And all this furniture, how finely it has been kept! I am sure it will be a pleasure to me, at any time to lend a helping hand. I love bright furniture; but none of your fine French polish for me. Nothing like elbow-grease, madam, for furniture!"

Mrs. Walsingham wished it possible that her husband could be of Mrs. Knivett's opinion.

She was punctual to the moment, at the great gate of St. Paul's, but her husband was not there. She was not very much surprised, because she knew it so difficult for him to keep an appointment. She walked backward and forward in sight

of the gate, till two quarters had tolled, and **she grew uneasy and dispirited**. Was he ill? Had he fallen into some strange distress, and knew not now whence to summon her? And the child, the poor child, what would become of him? The idea almost made her dizzy. "Oh, this separation has been a wild scheme," thought she. "Perhaps it will cost—perhaps it has already cost him, or both of them, their lives!" Her steps grew as hurried and bewildered as her thoughts; and when, at ten minutes before seven, her husband stood before her, and little Willy caught hold of her dress, she felt ready to faint. "Thank God," she exclaimed, "that you are come! but, oh, you should not have kept me waiting thus!"

Walsingham was astonished to find himself after his time; he meant to have been punctual; and Willy declared that papa had set his watch just as they left Dorking, and that they had only stopped to look in at the pretty shop-windows since they got off the coach at Charing Cross.

How impossible it was for Walsingham to be punctual! Margaret thought that she would not have subjected him to the anxiety of mind which she had endured, but she did not say so; and she **was distressed to see that he looked pale and out of spirits**. He was so; and this coming back to

what he considered degradation, was terrible: and, could he have delayed it, by weeks or months, or even years of absence, he would have done it. Willy ran talking on with all the eagerness of a child, and mingled up Leith Hill, Box Hill, and yellow butterflies, with his delight in the attractions of the shop-windows which they passed.

“And whither are we bound?” at length asked Walsingham, as, after walking through St. Martin-le-Grand and Aldersgate, they entered Goswell Street—the first allusion he had made to the subject which pressed so heavily on his heart; “whither are we bound? for, to tell you the truth, I do not admire the direction: surely we are not to live in Islington!”

“No, love,” replied his wife, “but our new abode is in Pentonville.”

“Lord bless me!” exclaimed poor Walsingham, with a wretchedness of tone that went to his wife’s heart.

“Yes, it is true, dear Edward,” continued she, cheerfully, and wishing to prepare him for the worst—“and we lodge at a watchmaker’s.”

Walsingham literally made a pause, and dropped his wife’s arm from his. “Well, Margaret,” said he, bitterly, “you have brought us low indeed; but, thank Heaven, we cannot fall much lower.”

She made no reply, for she was not sure of either of these facts—either that it was *she* who had brought them low, or that they would fall no lower.

Not another word was spoken, except on indifferent subjects; and, before long, they entered the watchmaker's door.

Walsingham looked upon himself as a hopelessly degraded man, and he made up his mind to take whatever came, without observation. According to his apprehension, it would be the truest philosophy. It therefore was with great disappointment, if not mortification, that his wife found all her little schemes and forethought for his indulgence and gratification, either unperceived or unappreciated. He did not seem to notice his easy chair set invitingly for him, nor his slippers and evening coat, which were laid ready; nor, fallen though he thought himself to be, that still the clean damask napkin was carefully folded, the silver fork still laid for him, and the hot, savoury steak served with as much propriety as in the days of his prosperity. Or if he did notice these things, it was but with the morbid sense that this exact observance, which was intended to spare his feelings, only harrowed them the more.

The next morning, his wife, unable longer to

endure this cold indifference, and knowing that there existed a strong necessity for him manfully to face his misfortunes, and rouse himself into exertion, gave him the history of the last fortnight, without disguising the fatigue she had gone through, or the annoyance she had endured. He was almost perplexed with the very idea. "You are an angel," he said, when she had finished! "and you really have done miracles: but oh, Margaret, to think of coming here!—to take lodgings at a watchmaker's! When you spoke so cheerfully in your letter of the future, I expected something better than this."

The tears started to her eyes. "How differently," she said, "you and I estimate things. I thank the Almighty that we have such a home as this!" and then she added, looking round with a cheerful countenance, "I do not ask you to admire any thing, but tell me, is it not comfortable? See, here is your own chair; and there is your favourite pair of nymphs—and are they not on pretty brackets? and here is your mother's picture—hanging in a very good light too:—you are not without your old friends!"

Walsingham heaved a sigh which was very much akin to a groan. "Those few meagre relics," at length he said, "annoy me infinitely

more than **no** vestige whatever. They keep the past in the mind: when I see them, I know that I am fallen!"

"No, Edward," she said, "you take a false view of your circumstances; you are not fallen, so long as you deserve your own self-respect—so long as you have acted honestly and uprightly towards your fellow-men! Thank God! you owe no man a shilling; these few possessions are honestly your own; and, please Heaven to prolong us our health, what should hinder us raising ourselves and our children above indigence?"

"Lord bless me!" said he, impatiently, "how is it to be done? the very power of my mind is gone; in the midst of poverty I shall always be poor. These very lodgings will sink my spirit; the sound of that old woman's voice, and the very knowledge of the string of watches stretching across the window below, will distress me for ever."

CHAPTER VII.

A HOPELESS QUEST.

TIME wore on, and Walsingham, as he said, remained poor. He solicited the assistance of many former friends—of men, at least, who, in his prosperity, had professed themselves his friends—and many were liberal of promises. He was flattered with hopes of situations in the Customs, in the India House, in various Insurances Offices, and even in the Herald's Office itself; but the hope was all that he obtained: and at length, the very men who had raised the false hopes, tired of his solicitations, began to treat him coldly, and then stood altogether aloof. He had filled, in the meantime, several situations; but some he had thrown up in disgust, and others he lost from his very incapacity for business. All this continual change, this perpetual disappointment and unsuccess, made him doubtful and distrustful of himself; and he lost, in great measure, his former confident, unembarrassed air, which had insured influence and success in his better days. His dress, also, insensibly acquired that harsh, napless

look which belongs to the needy man. The very consciousness of this stealing-on air of shabbiness, depressed him even more painfully than the coolness and rebuffs of his friends.

One day, at the commencement of winter, about four years after their coming to the watchmaker's, Walsingham dressed himself in his very best manner. He was thin and care-worn, with hollow cheeks and hollow eyes; and his dark hair was thickly sprinkled with gray. It was not often, of late, that he had taken extraordinary pains with his person; but he was bent this day upon doing the very best for himself. His linen was whole, and spotlessly clean; his hat and coat were studiously brushed; his best black stock put on with great precision; his trowsers carefully strapped down to his well-blackened, but twelve-months-old boots; and his dark kid gloves, repeatedly, but invisibly mended, and fitting as well as old gloves might, were heedfully drawn on, and his shirt-wristbands made visible just half an inch beyond the cuff of his coat. It would have been evident to any one that he had some important business in view. He had. He was going to present himself before a bank-director, whose advertisement in the *Times* he had answered, and whose reply had now invited him to an

interview. Poor fellow! twenty others besides himself had received a similar reply; and the one-and-twenty hoping and fearing candidates met in the same apartment, each in a short time after the other. Walsingham glanced round in dismay. Each one was eyeing the rest with inquisitive and envious glances, as if each thought the others interlopers who would come between himself and the desired good. Scarcely a word was said, but each tried to look perfectly at ease; some whistling, some humming a tune, some walking quickly about, and others looking through the windows. There was a rush whenever the door opened, for admittance, each eager to get precedence; for on that precedence success might depend. Some kind of regulation, however, was acted upon in the admission, and Walsingham's turn came among the latest. But he felt no immediate reason to be dissatisfied with the interview granted him; he was left in uncertainty, it is true, but his name, age, and residence, were noted down in a book, and he was desired to call at ten the day after the morrow.

Walsingham, as we have said, was kept waiting a long time. He stood four hours in a large cold room; the streets were wet through which he had walked, and his boots were not the best in the

world: add to this, a drizzling rain had come on in his walk; and he had not been long in waiting before he felt a chilly, comfortless sensation come over him. But the hope, however vague, which had been excited in his breast, dismissed any anxious thought about himself, and he went home to cheer them with the hope that he might perhaps get a situation of two hundred pounds a year.

The next morning he felt very unwell; but he had forgotten the large cold room, and the misty rain, and only wondered what could be amiss with him; and when his wife urged him to take something warm and go to bed, he laughed away her anxieties, quite unwilling to yield to any indisposition which might confine him for a moment.

The next day he dressed himself with the same scrupulous care, and punctually presented himself. Poor Walsingham! that once he was five minutes before his time! After a delay of two hours he was admitted, and was told by the gentleman he had formerly seen, that there were others beside himself to be consulted; that he had failed to see them, and that it must still stand over.

Walsingham inquired when he should call again.

"Oh," replied the other, carelessly, "in two or three days: or, stay, we have your address; if we decide in your favour, you shall hear from us."

His hopes sunk; but he requested that he might hear soon, as he was naturally very anxious. The gentleman looked at him as if he thought his request very impertinent, and replied, "that if their decision were favourable, of course he would hear; but his opinion was, that it would not be so."

Walsingham would have asked if any thing had prepossessed the gentleman unfavourably towards him—for at that moment he was very humble—but the other motioned to the door. Walsingham went out, and, regardless of who might see him, or what might be thought of him, absolutely wept as he walked homeward.

That was the last time he walked in the streets of London. The severe cold which he had taken, and which he had concealed from his wife, settled upon his lungs; and an illness followed which confined him to his bed through the winter. He had scarcely recovered in the spring, when a paralytic stroke took the use of his left side, and reduced him in a great measure to helplessness. In process of time, however, he recovered his health sufficiently to be able to write; and, for upwards of twelve months, he was employed in copying folios for lawyers. He became very expert in **this business**, and might have practised it much

longer, had not the close confinement again brought an illness which in the end became confirmed consumption.

Houses had been built, right and left, round the watchmaker's at Pentonville, and the situation became every day less desirable. The watchmaker himself died, and, as his wife intended to reside with her married daughter in the country, the little establishment was broken up.

Mrs. Walsingham then took the little house in — Street, opposite Miss Poinden's, and the removal took place, of which Miss Barbara Poinden spoke in our opening chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW CHARACTERS.

BUT it is time we introduced the children of the Walsinghams more fully to our readers; and these children, at the time the family left the watchmaker's, were, as Miss Barbara correctly stated, five in number. At the time they left Highgate, they consisted but of four. A little scene or

two shall make our young readers acquainted with them.

“Willy,” said Mary, the eldest girl, taking her brother by the hand, the first evening of his arrival at the watchmaker’s, “you must come with me, and be quite still. We don’t live at Highgate now, you see, but we have such pretty little rooms here; and I’ve been mamma’s maid, for Kitty’s gone, and so is cook, and Betsy, and we have only Rebecca: Rebecca is the new maid; but I am sure you will like her. And this is Grace’s and my room; and little Jack is to sleep in the crib beside us; and I am to dress Jack, and help Grace to dress herself—only mamma washes Jack all over at night.”

“I don’t like this room at all,” interrupted Willy. It is not half as pretty as that at Highgate; nor half as pretty as our’s at Dorking. Oh, it was so pleasant at Dorking! I wish you and Grace could go. And Box Hill is so high, and so is Leith Hill: and there are butterflies, and box-trees as big as houses!”

“Butterflies as big as houses, Willy?” asked Grace, who had come softly into the chamber.

“No,” replied Willy, indignantly, “box-trees as big as houses; and such butterflies!” And Willy then unburdened his mind of some of the

pent-up delights of the Dorking sojourn; and the second mention of the pretty chamber then recalled the one in which they stood.

"Now, Grace," asked he, "do *you* call this a pretty room?"

"No, I am sure I do not," replied Grace; "the window is not straight, and there is nothing but backs of houses to be seen from it; and I don't like the paper; and there are no pictures; and the chimney-piece is only wood. I don't like it at all."

"But, Grace," interrupted Mary, "you must not say so—you *must* like it. Mamma told me something that convinced me that we must be contented; and we must not find fault; and we must do everything for ourselves—much more than we did at Highgate; and we must help one another, and love one another," said she, putting her arms affectionately round the neck of each. "Oh, mamma told me something that made me cry so!"

"I know what it was," said Grace; "I heard cook say that we were not as rich as we had been. Oh! Willy," continued she, in an earnest and sorrowful voice, "all the pictures are gone, and the casts, and the marble table, and the or-molu lamps, and the piano; I am so very sorry!"

Willy was confounded by this strange intelligence. "And so we are to live here, then," remarked he, after a pause of a few moments; "then I know now what made poor papa so sorry when we were at Dorking; he was not half as merry as he was at Richmond, and yet Box Hill and Leith Hill, and Denbies, and Deepdene, and Norbury Park, are a great deal prettier than all Richmond."

"Yes, Willy," said Mary, who felt herself to be full of experience, "mamma says we are never to complain of anything before papa, nor to say that it is not as nice as Highgate; for, though it may be true, it would do no good, and only distress poor papa. Now, you must remember, both of you; and I am sure we shall be very happy here, for there are very pretty walks."

"Yes, that there are," said Grace, "for I went out with Rebecca and Jack, and it is pleasant, though it is not like Highgate."

"And then," chimed in Mary, "Mrs. Knivett is such a nice old lady."

"Mrs. Knivett?" asked Willy.

"Yes," said Grace, "Mrs. Knivett lives at this house, only you don't know her; and she is very good-natured; and she looks very like an old picture on a Sunday, for she wears such a funny

little bonnet, and a black silk cloak, and such a handsome, old-fashioned gown. She is very good-natured; do you know, she gave Jack some bread and honey, and Grace some such nice apple-marmalade. And then old Mr. Knivett—he makes watches down in the parlour—sits singing all day long; and he works with such pretty little tools.”

“I think, Willy,” said Mary, “you would like to be a watchmaker—and then you would get some money—mamma’s watch was worth fifteen guineas.”

“Oh, Willy, do you know,” whispered Grace, “mamma has parted with her watch; it was packed up with her gold chain, and all those pretty rings and brooches; and the necklace and the cross, Willy, are all gone.”

“Don’t say a word about it,” said Mary; “mamma cried very much when she packed up the box; and when I told her she had promised me the necklace when I grew a woman, it only made her cry more—so don’t say a word about it.”

“And, Willy,” said Grace, “never ask mamma what time it is by her watch. I will teach you the clock, for, do you know, Mr. Knivett taught me since I came here.”

“And where am I to sleep?” asked Willy,

after the three had remained in silence for some time.

“ You sleep in papa and mamma’s room, in the nursery French bed ; and, you must know,” said Mary, “ that Grace and I hemmed the ends of your curtains our own selves.”

The children said truly, that they must learn to do everything for themselves, for, a fifth child being born in the first twelvemonth of their residence at Pentonville, neither Mrs. Walsingham nor Rebecca had time to spare for waiting on them. But this was no disadvantage to them ; they gained self-dependence, and the constant interchange of little good offices only increased their affection for each other.

The great cause of anxiety to their mother was the little chance there seemed of giving them education—that part of education, at least, which is gained at school. But what will not affection and necessity achieve ? Their mother undertook their education herself. Her own school-books were looked up—lessons learned and repeated—copies set and sums done—and even history and travels read and explained, to the infinite amazement of good Mrs. Knivett, who seemed to take a livelier interest in the domestic arrangements of the family than Walsingham himself, who, dis-

pirited and self-absorbed, had but little interest in anything.

After his paralytic attack, when he was wholly confined to their room, and the returns even of his former precarious labour were so seriously diminished, his wife found it necessary that she also should add to the family resources. What was there for her to do but needlework—that most unproductive of all employment? Nothing. And needlework, accordingly, she did. She hired herself to a ready-made linen warehouse, and, while she was occupied in the education of her children, plied her busy needle incessantly.

Let it not, however, be supposed, that all this was done without exertion and fatigue, both of body and mind. The imparting instruction, even to the quickest and most docile of children, is severe labour; and when to this was added the necessity of assiduously attending to a sedentary and dull occupation, the extent of her praiseworthy efforts and endurance may be understood. Margaret Walsingham was a heroine in the best sense of the word; still her spirits often sank, and she felt bodily exhaustion that almost amounted to illness; but that energy of mind, and that **strength** of moral principle, which, combined, produce the truest heroism, in the very moment of

despondency brought hope, and nerved her for further and even greater exertion.

Walsingham's long confinement and increasing illness made him fretful and wayward; and, when it was necessary for the family to remove from Pentonville, he insisted upon their taking a house, though it might be ever so small, in preference to lodgings; for poor Mrs. Knivett's cracked voice, and the string of watches in the window below, had never ceased to annoy him. The small house, therefore, in —— Street was taken, and he was removed thither in a sedan-chair, as Miss Barbara Poinden had said.

The furniture had been mostly removed the day before, but his chamber was the only room in a state of preparation; into it he was carried, and placed in his easy chair.

"Now, let that hideous pair of nymphs be carried out of my sight," were his first words, as he saw Grace put them on the brackets which had been fixed in the wall; "I have seen those things before me for the last five years; every fold of their drapery is disgusting to me; they recall nothing but unpleasant thoughts!" Grace stood rebuked, and, taking down the unfortunate casts, which to her taste were exquisitely beautiful—the only beautiful things in the house—she carried

them into her own chamber, intending, with her mother's permission, to keep them there.

The family was soon settled in their little domicile, and things took that dull routine, in one week's time, which might continue for years. Walsingham's chamber was the first floor front—the airiest and most cheerful room in the house. There was little prospect of his ever leaving this chamber, except for his last home. Here Mrs. Walsingham generally sate at her never-ceasing work. The three elder children came in and out; but Grace, who was on many accounts her father's favourite, was more frequently there than any of the others. The two eldest were the habitually useful members of the family; Mary was the housekeeper, and Willy the man-of-all-work. The two youngest, Jack and little Margaret, who, the latter, at least, had been born, as it were, to their present fortunes, and who had no remembrance of better days wherewith to gloom the present—who had never had nursery-maids, nor any expensive indulgences whatever—were two bold-spirited, robust children, full of health and animal spirits, which nothing but the fear of disturbing their father could repress; they, therefore, were but seldom the companions of the **poor nervous invalid.**

Good Miss Barbara, over the way, puzzled herself prodigiously to know exactly how the family managed matters. Mrs. Walsingham's day might be said to begin at nine o'clock at night. At that hour her husband had his supper, and settled down for such rest as he might get—she softly stealing to the little sofa-bed in his chamber towards twelve, or later. After her husband was left for the night, she began her house-work, at first alone, but, by degrees, Mary and Willy insinuated themselves into a participation of all the duties and burdens of the little household; and then it was much more quickly dispatched, everything being left perfectly clean over night, and the fires ready laid for lighting next morning. Mrs. Walsingham was not ashamed of the performance of any duty, however humble; yet she had a sense of self-respect—call it pride, if you please—which made her unwilling to be seen by her neighbours employed in her more menial offices. Hence her street-door was so miraculously cleaned. This was for some time her early morning work, for it was no use cleaning it over night. Mary was willing to undertake it, but the good mother, who saw her daughter growing tall and comely for her years, would not thus expose her to the notice of early passers by, or even of

policemen, and it remained, for long, the most unpleasant part of her household work. At length William insisted upon undertaking it himself.

"But, my dear," said his mother, "it is not quite the proper work for a boy."

"Never mind that," said he, "I shall be useful to you; and, besides, ——" He did not know exactly what he meant to say besides; and his mother urged that, with his bad cough, it was not right for him—there was so strong a draft at the door, and the mornings were so cold.

"As to that," said William, "I'll manage; and I shall clean the knives and shoes, and I shall begin to do a great many more things than I have yet done, for I don't like to see your hands and Mary's get so hard."

His mother kissed him with unfeigned affection, and, from that day forth, William, true to his word, cleaned the street-door. It would, indeed, have touched the kind heart of Miss Barbara Poinden, had she seen the thin, pale-faced boy, with his woollen comforter tied round his neck, and his old cap on, cleaning the steps and rubbing the knocker; or, had poor Walsingham, in the room above, only known or thought of all that his family were reduced to, it would have made his sick-bed more uneasy than ever, if not have

driven him to his grave at once. All day long, after Mrs. Walsingham had arranged with Mary the frugal family-dinner, and prepared herself the choice morsel for her husband's eating, she sat at her unceasing needlework.

"That's beautifully fine linen," said Walsingham, one day to his wife, as she stood at his bedside, gathering the sleeve of a shirt; "but why do you make up such for me?—why, indeed, make any, for I shall not need them long?"

"My love," replied his wife, astonished at his words—for though she had never told him that she was compelled to do needlework, yet, as she had done it for the last three years, she had supposed him aware of the fact—"these are not for you."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the poor man, all at once perceiving the truth; "and you are reduced to this!"

"We none of us complain, dear Edward," she replied, "and to us it is no hardship."

Walsingham turned his face to the pillow and wept: it was, to his mind, another and an unexpected proof of his family's degradation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWELFTH HOUR.

GRACE, as we have said, was her father's favourite. She was now nearly twelve—of a pensive countenance, delicate figure, and soft, gentle manners. In many respects she greatly resembled her father; she had the same love of elegance, the same tastes, and the same irritable temperament. She had always shrunk from the performance of the common household duties, and she had been spared it by her elder brother and sister. Having thus much more leisure than either of them, she devoted herself principally to waiting on her father, of whom she was extremely fond, and in reading to him. The dingy paper and the old-fashioned type did not offend him, as the words came to his ear through the sweet voice of his daughter; and thus many hours of every day were most profitably and agreeably spent.

“And what has become of those two young rogues?” asked the father, on one of those very days of which Miss Barbara spoke, when he sat

in his easy chair; "I have not seen them for weeks, nor scarcely heard them for days."

"They are down stairs," said Grace.

"Why do they never come to see me?" asked he, half peevishly; "I shall be entirely forgotten at this rate."

"They were too noisy the last time they were up," said the mother.

"Oh yes," replied Walsingham, "I remember, and I was very angry—but let them come up now."

Grace ran down, eager to convey to the little excommunicated ones what she knew would be joyful tidings.

"Father wants to see you, dears," said Grace, as she entered the little back-parlour, in which they were busily playing at riding to market on a broken chair; for Jack, though he was turned nine years old, liked that play best which had most fun in it.

Down jumped they, overjoyed at the news, and, leaping up stairs, without waiting for Grace to look at them, rushed into their father's chamber. They had coarse pinafores on, and old shoes; wild, rough-looking hair, though it had been smooth enough in the morning; and their hands and faces were very far from clean. They

had been playing in a room without a fire. and, though their blood was warm with exercise, their red hands and cheeks looked coarse and cold. Poor Walsingham's heart had been full of affection, but this sudden vision of robust childhood shocked him; and, holding up his feeble right hand with a motion of disgust, and closing his eyes, he exclaimed, "Oh, Margaret, how like common children they are grown—I cannot bear to see them!"

The poor children, who felt that they had displeased their father, though they knew not how, slunk out of the chamber, and stood outside the door silent and bewildered. Mrs. Walsingham looked at her husband, the tears starting to her eyes, but said nothing. The silent reproof, however, went to his heart.

"Margaret," said he the next day, taking her hand affectionately, "it is only by very slow degrees that I shall ever gain wisdom. Thank God, however, these last few hours have taught me more than years. I have taken a review of my life: I have seen the duties I have neglected—the advantages I have wasted—the blessings I have thrown away! I have been an unworthy husband, and a negligent father; but, please Heaven to strengthen me in the performance of duties, even at the eleventh hour I will not fail you."

His wife wept; and, though she could not blame her husband as he blamed himself, she blessed God, on her bended knees, for all the mercies he had bestowed upon them; among which she emphatically numbered her husband's prolonged days: and she prayed, that whatever his pious wishes and desires might be, that the Almighty would enable him to perform them.

That morning was as a sabbath of the heart. The blessing of Heaven was assuredly on that home of humble virtue.

The two little children were again admitted to their father's room. It is true that Grace washed them, put on their Sunday dresses, and, with smoothly-combed locks, sent them in, hand in hand. "You should not have done this, Grace," said he, mildly; "it is the severest of reproofs, and I hardly needed it." Grace felt the truth of her father's remark, and wondered at her own dulness.

"How I love father," said Jack, as he went down stairs again.

"I wish he would get well," said Margaret.

Mary shook her head, and the tears were in her eyes.

"Why are you crying, Mary?" asked Jack.

"Poor dear father," said Mary, "will **never** be any better."

Jack and Margaret cried too. "But what can we do for him?" asked the little girl.

"Be good, quiet children," replied their sister; "learn some pretty verses to say to him, and mind to have clean hands and faces when you go up stairs, for father cannot bear to see you dirty."

"Oh yes," said Jack, in whom it was an act of virtue to be clean; "and we won't play at fish-women any more."

Walsingham did not feel that he could be very useful to Mary. She had no particular tastes; her characteristics were strong good sense, perfect disinterestedness, and keen, quick understanding. Whatever she had read she had treasured up and comprehended; and whatever she did, she did well. The management of the house, as we have said, entirely devolved upon her; and it was a mystery how one so perpetually occupied with undignified duties had found time to acquire so much. To William and Grace, however, the father could be essentially useful in many ways.

It was a touching sight to see the poor invalid propped up in his bed, feeble as he was, in the intervals of his harassing cough teaching William his Latin grammar, or instructing him in mathematics; or even teaching the little ones their elementary lessons and going through a column of

common spelling, when the pupil was unwittingly dull, with a patience and propriety that cast his wife's former efforts entirely into the shade.

"And have you no drawing to show me, Grace?" asked he one day, after she had read an Italian lesson. Grace hesitated.

"What were you doing yesterday? Your mother said you were drawing."

"Yes, father, but——"

"But what? Let me see what you were doing," added he, with an earnestness that brought on his cough with terrible violence. Poor Grace thought that she was the cause of this, and ran instantly to fetch her drawing. Her father, however, was too much exhausted to give any further lessons that day.

Next morning Grace went softly to his bed, and, kissing him tenderly, "Dearest father," she said, "I did not wish to show you the drawings yesterday, because I thought you might not like the subjects; but, however, here they are." And, half hesitating still, she held up two chalk drawings of the nymphs which he had ordered from his chamber. "I have been very long over them, and I only finished them the day before yesterday."

"Ah!" said Walsingham, mournfully, after he

had examined them for some time, "if it would only please Heaven to prolong my life, what pleasure we two might have together!"

From this day forward Grace received drawing lessons from her father, whenever he was able to give them.

The discarded casts were again placed on their brackets, or on a stand, as best suited the student; and, now in one position, and now in another, they were copied over and over, until Grace became even more familiar with every fold than her father had been.

Mrs. Walsingham had said, in the early time of their misfortunes, that happiness was not entirely dependent on wealth. The truth of this assertion was proved; and her husband himself, whose memory was painfully alive to every circumstance of the past, was the first to remind her of her own words.

The time of separation, however, was drawing near: Latin, mathematics, Italian, and drawing, were studied only at irregular times, and with longer intervals. At length the physician, who had had his stated times for calling, was summoned suddenly, owing to Walsingham's increased illness; and he announced that, in all probability, **a few days would terminate the poor invalid's**

suffering. He was right. Walsingham died but two days after this opinion was given.

How like a good Samaritan would Miss Poin-den have seemed to the stricken heart of poor Mrs. Walsingham, had she sent in Martha with her compliments and offers of neighbourly service; for on that very morning, for the first time, Margaret Walsingham felt hopelessly forlorn!

But "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;" and the widow soon ceased to mourn as one that refused to be comforted.

CHAPTER X.

NEW PROSPECTS.

By the death of Walsingham his family was deprived of the only certain income which they had possessed for several years; but their industry, their combined efforts and affections, and their good economy, that surest of all alchemy, were left; with this joint stock the mother looked to the future with an anxious, it is true, but an undismayed heart. The last quarterly payment had

been received only two weeks before poor Walsingham's death, and they had punctually been paid the bequeathed fifty pounds for his funeral expenses.

It was with an unexpressed, but a general sentiment of still closer-drawn affection, that the little family group gathered round their fire on the mournful evening of the funeral. The tea was almost silently taken, even by the younger branches of the family; and, as they sate in a still prolonged silence, now and then a sob might be heard from some heart whose sorrow was too strong to be repressed.

Mrs. Walsingham was the first to make an effort at dispelling the general gloom, although her own heart at the time felt an unwonted depression. "My children," she said, "it has pleased God to afflict us; but it is not his will that we should sink under any affliction. Years of experience have proved to me, that no dispensation comes from his hand without its full freight of mercies. "We have lost a dear friend"—and here the widow's voice faltered—"or rather, I should say," she continued, "the Almighty has taken him to his rest; and we are left, my children, but not without sufficient blessings: we have health, united affections, and various faculties,

and, as I trust, before God and man, clear consciences! How, then, should we utter a complaint, or why should we be cast down?"

"But what can we do?" asked William; "how can we help you?"

"We can do many things," said Mary, hopefully; "whatever mother determines upon doing, we shall find many ways of helping her."

"Now I can run up and down stairs, without fearing to make a noise," said Jack, cheerfully; "I'll carry up the coal and water, for I am a deal stronger than you, William."

"Ah!" remarked poor Grace, with a faltering voice, "there will need no more coal up stairs now!"

"My plans, dear children," said Mrs. Walsingham, "are these, and I make you all confidants in them; because from all of you, for the present at least, I shall need co-operation. I shall open a small haberdasher's shop."

"A shop!" repeated the elder ones.

"I formed this plan," continued she, "long since, in anticipation of the event which it has pleased Heaven should now take place. There is at the corner of ——— Street, which is a good thoroughfare, and leads to the Park, a small shop now to be let. That I intend to take. We must

be very humble at first, and contented with very small things, for my capital would seem absurd to tradesmen generally; but I remember the widow's mite, and the widow's oil, and I am not discouraged."

A knock at the door interrupted a re-discussion of the shop-keeping scheme the next morning, as Mrs. Walsingham and her two eldest girls were employed over a set of shirts, which had been interrupted by Walsingham's death. William hurried the last of the breakfast things, which he had been washing, into the cupboard, and ran to the door. It was the good physician who had attended his father. Without the ceremony of an apology, or any circuitous introduction—for Dr. Elliot had never a moment to spare—he began with the occasion of his call. He wished to know if there were any way in which he could assist them. In a very few words Mrs. Walsingham stated her plans, and her wish to retain the assistance of her three elder children. "Very good, very good," said the physician; "quite right, Mrs. Walsingham."

"For my youngest boy," said she, half hesitating——

"What! the fine little fellow with the black hair," said he, glancing round, as if expecting to find him.

“Yes,” she replied; “there are, sir, many good institutions in London, where he would receive a better education than I have any chance of giving him at present.”

“Yes, yes; to be sure,” said the physician, “a boy like that deserves a good education; I’ll see what I can do for him. And as to this shop-keeping scheme of yours—you’ll pardon me, but some capital is needed.”

Poor Mrs. Walsingham, free from false shame as she was, felt some hesitation in mentioning the amount of her capital, and a slight colour passed over her cheek.

“If, my good lady,” continued the physician, “one or two hundred pounds would be useful to you, have no reluctance in asking it from me.”

“Oh sir!” said she, “I would not venture to borrow sums as large as those; but if I should need assistance, I will not forget that God has sent me a friend.”

“All perfectly right,” responded the Doctor, as if he had been hearing the effect of a prescription; and, giving his hand, and hurrying away, at the same moment, in three seconds more he was driving down the street.

“The last of their goods are gone now,” said Miss Barbara Poinden, about a fortnight after the above conversation; “and very clean, respectable

goods they are, though old-fashioned. And now there goes Mrs. Walsingham—poor woman, how respectable she looks in her mourning—and that pale-faced boy too—she has put the key in her pocket—they will sleep to-night at their new house. Bless me, what a deal I think about those people, and never spoke one word to them in all my life!”

“Whether you speak to them or not,” said her sister, “you speak enough of them.”

“But, did I tell you,” asked Miss Barbara, not perceiving that her sister’s remark was intended for a reproof, “that the second boy has actually got the Blue-coat School dress on? I protest, I didn’t know him at first, for all his beautiful black hair, you know, sister, is cut off—they make those boys such frights! And he looked half ashamed of his yellow stockings; I declare I was quite sorry for him; and he thrust his hand into his sister’s when they went out yesterday—no, it was the day before yesterday—as if he wanted somebody to countenance him, and make him feel that he was himself; and yet he’s a fine, bold lad, with ten times the spirit of his brother. That boy will go off in a consumption, it’s my opinion, and, if I were his mother, he should wear flannel on his chest.”

“Martha says,” again began Miss Barbara,

after she had knit three rows of the worsted shawl, which was then occupying her, "that they have opened a shop—a little haberdasher's shop—somewhere in ——— Street. I think, sister, we might be a few shillings in their way now and then; pins and needles, and stay-laces, and buttons, and sewing-cotton, are articles always in demand."

"We are very well served at Venables's," replied Miss Poinden; "and articles bought from those little shops are always inferior."

"Ah!" sighed Miss Barbara, fearing within herself that she had no chance with her sister, "if everybody reasoned so, what would become of the small shop-keepers?"

"Thank Heaven!" returned Miss Poinden, "that *I* am not a small shopkeeper, and, therefore, it is no concern of mine."

The little shop at the corner of ——— Street was to be opened on the following Monday. Mrs. Walsingham's capital amounted to seven-and-thirty pounds; and ten pounds she borrowed from Dr. Elliot, but not until she had found that her seven-and-thirty would be entirely consumed in the purchase of her little stock, for all of which she paid ready money.

The little shop was neat and clean, and cheerful-looking to begin with; there was altogether a

happy look about it, even before the goods were put in it; and the physiognomy even of a shop is of some importance. How busy each member of the family was in arranging every thing in its proper place;—the neatly-tied-up packets of gloves—no great quantity of them, we confess; the stockings, the mits, the various woollen wares of divers colours; the crewels, the worsteds, the wool; the compartmented drawers of sewing-cotton, white and coloured; the buttons, the wire, the thread, the tape, the pins and needles, and all the thousand multifarious articles of the haberdasher's ware. There was a glass-case with its small store of cutlery, in one part, and a few dolls, wax and composition, in the other.

The shop made no great show after all; but a world of thought and care was expended over it. William rubbed and polished the wood-work, and cleaned the windows, and left not an atom of dust in any corner; Grace arranged the colours of the wools and netting-silks, so as to produce the best effect, and then she sate down with her sister and mother, for three whole days, before the shop was opened, to assist them in stitching gentlemen's collars, in making stocks, and in knitting some dozen woollen night-caps and comforters, little

socks, and mits, which, as autumn had set in, they thought might be attractive.

At last the Saturday night came, which concluded their labours. The shop was to be opened on the Monday morning; and, for the first time for several years, the mother and her five children went altogether to church. It was an anxious Sunday to all the elder members of the family; the mother herself felt more anxious than she chose to avow; and she did not sleep that night without putting up a prayer to the Almighty, that he would be pleased to bless these her humble but honest endeavours.

William was up before it was light. He passed first into the little shop, to see that all was right; he lit the ready-laid kitchen fire, cleaned the shoes, and then opened the shop-shutters, which was to be his business. He was, in fact, to be porter, errand-boy, youngest apprentice, and head-clerk, all in one. There was no customer before breakfast; and, while that meal was dispatching in the little back room, which opened into the shop—the only room, indeed, on the ground-floor—every eye was continually turned to the shop-door, as if customers were plenty as blackberries: but none came. Mrs. Walsingham sate behind the

counter, busy at needlework, all morning; and Mary and Grace, after their housework was done, sate down also, to prepare what, it was hoped, others would buy; Mary, to knit night-caps; and Grace, to net purses. William fidgetted about from the counter to the door, from the door to the inner room, full of nervous excitement; for nobody came. Two ragged children, for a penny ball of cotton, a servant-girl, who came intending to buy shoes, and took a shilling pair of scissors instead, and a policeman, who bought a fourteen-penny pair of woollen gloves, were the first day's customers.

A week went on, and things got no better. It was not encouraging. The family left off taking supper, partly because they were out of spirits, partly from motives of economy; for those who had so little coming in, and whose very bread was bought with borrowed money, must be satisfied, they thought, with three meals a day.

"Did you notice a little haberdasher's shop at the corner?" asked a certain Mrs. Spenser, as she walked one fine day, about this time, towards the Park. Her husband replied that he had not. "She is a widow," continued his wife, "who has just opened that shop. I have not been in it yet, but her anxious countenance strikes me every

time I go past. She looks to me like one **who** has seen better days. I doubt her shop will not answer; and she seems, poor thing, to have several children."

"Cannot you buy something from her?" asked her husband; "for you ladies are happily gifted with never-supplied wants."

"I will," replied Mrs. Spenser, "and we will call on our return."

They did so. Poor Mrs. Walsingham was cheered by their entrance; so was William, **who**, since he had nothing better to do, had taken his old Latin dilectus to get on with his lessons; so were Mary and Grace, to whom little Margaret, who had been sitting on a high stool by her mother at the counter, ran to communicate the joyful intelligence, that such a handsome lady and gentleman were buying such a many things, and were paying in gold! Five-and-thirty shillings good Mrs. Spenser laid out that morning at the little haberdasher's shop; a sovereign, half-a-sovereign, and a five-shilling piece; there was something generous in the very look of the coin. But far more than the money's worth was the kind look, and the few words of kind inquiry and sympathizing good-will which were spoken.

"**How I wish it had been a great, big parcel,**

ever so heavy," said William, "that I might have had the pleasure of carrying it home for them!"

It seemed as if Mrs. Spenser's purchase had brought good luck with it. An old man came in before they went out of the shop, and two young ladies immediately succeeded him. In the evening William said there had been fifteen customers; and Mrs. Walsingham announced that she had taken four pounds.

CHAPTER XI.

LITTLE MARGARET'S SORROW; AND THE FIRST HOLIDAY.

THINGS were decidedly taking a turn for the better; and, as the winter came on, so great was the demand for Mrs. Walsingham's peculiarly warm, home-made comforters, night-caps, gloves, and socks, that it required the unceasing industry of herself and her two daughters to supply the demand. Among her customers was a lady of the name of Aukland. She had one little daughter, about six years old, who, on her next birth-day, was to have a wax-doll which could open and

shut its eyes. In the centre of Mrs. Walsingham's glass-case lay a doll of this description, beautiful beyond measure in the eyes of this little child—a doll which sometimes lay with its eyes open, and sometimes with them shut. There was another little girl, besides this, whose heart had kindled with the most excessive admiration of this wax miracle, and that was Margaret Walsingham. Margaret had never possessed any bought toys; she never had a better doll than the one which Grace manufactured for her of linen; a beautiful doll, as the grateful but inexperienced child then thought; but oh, how inferior to these in her mother's glass-case, and to this, the very queen and empress of them all!

Mrs. Walsingham had forbidden her to open the glass-case, but her admiration through the glass was allowable. The little girl seated herself often by her mother, pleasing herself with day-dreams of how, if she had that doll, she would dress it for the day and carry it out with its blue eyes open, and then how she would bring it home, take off its gay clothes, put on its night-dress, little frilled cap and all, shut its eyes, and lay it to sleep on her own pillow. Such excessive admiration could not exist without touching; and, spite of the prohibition, the little girl, one day

when the shop, with closed door, was left to her keeping, opened the glass-case and gently pulled the wire; the pink eyelids closed, and the child was ready to scream with delight; another touch, and they opened. It seemed to her as if the doll woke and smiled upon her. "How I wish she were mine!" sighed she, as, with a throbbing heart, she closed the glass-case.

Her mother entered, but said not a word; she had not seen her. The temptation, once yielded to, could no longer be resisted, and the doll's eyes accordingly were sometimes open and sometimes shut. Neither Mrs. Walsingham, nor the elder girls, nor even William, had noticed this circumstance; but so it was. Margaret used to delight herself with the fearful pleasure, whenever she found herself alone in the shop. One unfortunate day, however, as she heard her mother's step near the door, she jerked the wire upwards, to open the eyes, and suddenly closed the glass-case. The next time she went, the wire moved freely, but the eyelids never closed. How was this?—what was amiss—had she done it? Yes; and she then remembered the jerk and the loose sensation with which the wire went backwards:—the doll was **spoiled!** All at once the horrible sense of disobedience, the dread of detection, the wish that

all was known, that she could undo what she had done—all the agony, in short, of an outrage done to a tender conscience, fell upon her spirit. The violent crimson which had flushed to the roots of her hair, and the tips of her ears, faded away, and a heavy sense of misery lay at her heart, that paled and saddened her countenance.

“ Oh, I wish Jack were at home! I could tell it all to Jack!” sobbed the poor child, as, after unusual kindness from her mother and sisters, who, supposing her ill, had sent her early to a warm bed, she lay tossing from side to side. “ What shall I do? what shall I do?” again, and again, she exclaimed, till, fairly exhausted with her distress, she sank into heavy sleep, only to wake with a soreness of heart on the morrow.

The morrow was the day before Christmas Eve, and the lady and her sister, wrapped in fur and velvet, came in to purchase the birthday present.

“ My little girl,” said the lady, “ has fixed her affections on a handsome wax-doll of yours, which can open and shut its eyes. To-morrow is her birthday, and I wish to purchase it for a birthday present.”

Margaret was sitting at the counter as these words were spoken. Her mother expressed her pleasure and her thanks; opened the glass-case,

and took out the doll, intending to exhibit its accomplishments; but the wire produced no effect. She remarked that this was certainly very strange. The doll had been injured; she could not conceive how it had happened.

"Oh, mother, dearest, dearest mother, I did it!" exclaimed Margaret, seizing her mother's hand, and laying her face upon it; "can you ever forgive me?"

"My child," said her mother, "you have done very wrong; you have done me great mischief!"

The child laid her face on the counter, and sobbed violently.

"You naughty little girl!" said the lady, "if I were your mamma, I would whip you!"

"She suffers more at this moment," replied Mrs. Walsingham, calmly, "than she would from such a punishment. But the doll is certainly spoiled, and I am sorry I have not another to offer you."

"It might soon be repaired," whispered the lady's sister to her; "I could almost do it myself. She'll sell it cheap," added she, within the other's bonnet.

"It is certainly spoiled," continued the lady, in reply to Mrs. Walsingham, "but I don't know

that Sophy would mind about the eyes, for it is just as pretty as ever."

"If it please the young lady quite as well, it might do," said Mrs. Walsingham, again presenting the doll.

"What is the price?" asked the lady.

"Seven shillings, in its uninjured state, madam."

"Seven shillings!" said the sister, "it is not worth more than five now;—in fact, I would not buy a damaged doll at any price; but Mrs. Auckland must please herself," said she, touching her elbow at the same time, which was intended to say, "Buy it!"

"I think I could get it repaired for you at the toy-manufactory," said Mrs. Walsingham.

"We must have it to-day," said the sister; "it's no use waiting to have it repaired. If we have it at all, we must have it to-night, to get it dressed."

"I'll give you five shillings for it," said the lady; "and, if it can be repaired, we can get it done."

"I think that's very fair," said the sister, who acted, on all occasions, as a *corps-à-reserve*.

"Very fair, Mrs. Walsingham," repeated the lady.

"I shall lose by it," said Mrs. Walsingham, "more than I can well afford."

"Of course you expect to lose by damaged goods," argued the sister; "and, do you remember, little miss," said she, leaning over the counter to Margaret, who still sate with her face buried in her hands, "never to meddle with your mamma's property again; for you hear she'll be a loser by it."

"I am a good customer of yours, Mrs. Walsingham," said the lady, in an insinuating voice, "and we like your woollen socks so much, that we must have another dozen pair."

"I thank you," returned Mrs. Walsingham; "and what size did you wish."

"I must call and bring you a pattern," replied the lady; "but we must have the doll;" and, taking a five-shilling piece from her purse, she laid it on the counter. "I have been a very good customer of yours, Mrs. Walsingham, and I shall send all my friends to you."

Mrs. Walsingham thanked her. "You must let your little boy carry the doll into the Regent's Park: there is the address," said she, giving a card. "And you must run, little boy," said she, addressing William, "and mind you do not break the doll; for we shall take a fly directly, and I

shall be quite provoked if you are not there in time. I'll call about the socks in a day or two, Mrs. Walsingham."

"I've a great mind not to carry the doll for her," said William, quite out of humour, and very slowly putting on his hat and gloves; "and, if it were not to oblige you, mother, I would not!"

"Oh, mother, will you ever kiss me again—will you ever forgive me—will you ever trust me again?" asked Margaret, half afraid to look into her mother's face, as soon as William was out of the shop.

"To be sure I shall forgive you," replied her mother, "and trust you also, in order that you may prove yourself trust-worthy. You must consider, my dear child, that it is as important for us to preserve our property uninjured, as it is to increase it. You are too young yet to increase it; all you can do is not to injure it. This doll cost me five shillings and sixpence; I hoped to sell it for seven, and thus gain one shilling and sixpence by it. You have injured the doll, and I can only obtain five shillings for it; I am thus a loser by you, not only sixpence in the first cost of the doll, but one and sixpence also which I hoped to gain. Do you understand?"

"Yes," sobbed Margaret.

"What can I do to help mother?" asked Margaret, from her sisters, to whom she told her trouble, and her grief for her mother's loss; "you are at work for her; can I do nothing to make up her loss, at least?"

"I think we can put you in a way of doing something to make up her loss," said Mary, kissing her: "have you any money at all?"

"I have only one silver sixpence, which the gentleman gave me for picking up his purse in the shop," said Margaret.

"If I were to set you some knitting, would you take pains to learn?" inquired her sister. Margaret joyfully promised.

The knitting was set, and, after about a week's practice, Margaret was pronounced able to begin upon a night-cap.

"But don't you say a single word to mother," said the little girl. "And, don't you think she will be very much surprised when I give her the two shillings?"

Her sisters thought she would, and promised to be faithful. The sixpence was laid out in wool, which produced two caps worth fifteenpence; this, again, was expended on fresh material; and, in somewhat more than two months' time, the little girl had two shillings in hand, be-

sides three caps in her mother's shop. Of course all this little merchandise could not be carried on without Mrs. Walsingham's knowledge; but it was understood amongst them, that Margaret's laudable mystery should be inviolate, and that no one should anticipate her act of justice, even by commendation.

One morning—it was on Shrove Tuesday—Margaret was observed by her mother at breakfast to look very smiling; to glance at her brother and sisters, and to fidget about in her chair, as if for very joy. “What makes you look so pleased, yet so mysterious,” asked she. Margaret took from her bosom a neat little packet, in white paper. “I have a little present for you, mother,” she said—“and yet not quite a present either;—it is the money I owe you—the two shillings—don't you remember?”—and she blushed and hesitated, unwilling to remind her mother of the doll.

“You are a dear, honest little girl,” said her mother, opening the packet, and looking at the money with great pleasure. “You have shown wonderful perseverance; for this money, I suppose, is obtained from the sale of those caps you have been knitting so long?”

“Yes, mother,” said Margaret.

“You have shown a strong and clear sense of

honour and justice in this little affair. You have given me real pleasure," said her mother, kissing her affectionately.

"I never was so happy in all my life," exclaimed the child, "and I don't care about dolls now!"

"Then," said her mother, "if I were to offer you a doll, a very nice doll, in exchange for your remaining caps, you would not accept it?"

"I think not," said she, half hesitating; "but what do you say, Mary?"

"Be guided, my love," said her mother, "by your own inclinations—by your own judgment."

"No—I won't have a doll," was at length her decision; "it would remind me of that unfortunate day."

"You shall go with me this morning," said her mother, to Dr. Elliott's. I am going to return the money which he so kindly lent me when we first opened the shop."

"It is a happy thing to pay money that one owes," replied she; "I am so glad you are going!"

"And as the shops will be closed after twelve," remarked Mrs. Walsingham, "suppose we all of us—Jack too—go to the Zoological Gardens? Dr. Elliott gave you tickets long ago."

"So did Mrs. Spenser," remarked Mary.

"How delightful! how delightful!" shouted

Margaret; and all agreed that it was a happy thought.

That Shrove Tuesday, bright and warm beyond most early spring days, afforded to this toiling and worthy family their first real holiday.

Blessings on those old holy-days of the Catholic institution, which, as if in benevolent foreknowledge of the wants of modern social life, are still retained! Blessings on them, I say, for they are like sunny glimpses in the desert of worky-day-life; like a pause in the wheel that grinds; like a relaxing of the chain that pinches. There is a sort of God-send in them; they seem out of the common run of things; an extra day of rest, besides the one in seven!

CHAPTER XII.

BRIGHTER PROSPECTS.

THE little shop prospered; and, before two years had elapsed, Mrs. Walsingham was able to make some improvements in her domestic establishment. There was a well-qualified maid-servant in the

kitchen, and an errand-boy in the shop; and, besides this, she was able to give constant employment to several women in making up linen, and the childrens' and babies' clothes, for which her shop was becoming much celebrated. The little concern was decidedly flourishing. The seven-and-thirty pounds had been turned over and over and over again; and, like the snow-ball in the deep snow, it grew at every turn. The shop shelves and drawers were full, and every corner was fitted up to hold boxes and cases of goods. The place bore a fanciful resemblance to a nest, which, as the brood becomes full-fledged and strong, is too narrow for its contents. Mrs. Walsingham, however, was unwilling to remove from a place which had evidently been so blessed to her; and the family inconvenience was soon remedied by the next house becoming vacant; the original tenement was, therefore, converted into work-rooms, second shop, and private room; and the family removed into the next, to which internal communication was made. In all these things Mrs. Walsingham saw the visible hand of Providence; and she went through her daily duties, her daily occupations, with an increasing thankfulness of spirit.

“ William, you are nearly fifteen,” said his

mother to him one Sunday evening, as the whole family sate together in their comfortable parlour; but it is never too late for you to learn," continued she, smiling—"you must now go to school."

William looked quite pleased, so did his sisters; and Jack, with no very gentle laugh, exclaimed, "Now, brother, you need not envy me."

"What think you of the London University?" asked his mother.

"I should like it of all things," replied he; "and, at my age, it sounds better to go to the University than to school." William, however, blushed as he said this—half suspecting that his words were foolish.

"Yes," said Grace, quite sympathizing with her brother, "you are right; it sounds a great deal better."

"But mother," said William, "do you think I shall seem *very* ignorant at first—as if I had been very much neglected—I don't mean *neglected* either"—said he, again correcting himself, in the fear that his words implied a censure on his mother—"I mean, shall I seem much more ignorant than common boys of my age?"

"I hope, not generally ignorant," replied his mother, "but, probably, deficient in much elementary knowledge."

"But," said Mary, "you will understand things so much better than younger boys, that you will soon overcome that deficiency; and poor, dear father, you know, thought you read Latin very well; and you can translate with great ease: you know something of mathematics, too; and you have been pondering over that old Encyclopædia that Jack borrowed for us, for these three months. There must be a deal of knowledge in this round head of yours," said she, pushing the thick locks from his forehead; "depend upon it, you'll be a first-rate scholar!"

"And, William," said Jack, with a countenance of very extraordinary gravity, "if you wouldn't be offended, I know what I would do. I would teach you grammar rules, and geography, and show you how to parse, and to find the latitude and longitude, and all that; and I would hear you spelling lessons, and words with meanings, and all!"

"Upon my word," said Grace, laughing, "you are very patronizing, Jack." But Jack neither looked abashed nor vexed.

"Thank you, brother," said William; "you shall hear me those lessons, and give me those instructions, for it is just what I want."

"There, Mistress Grace!" said Jack, nodding

at her, and archly glancing out of the corners of his laughing black eyes.

This happy scheme, the first-fruits, as it were, of their amended fortunes, furnished the fireside topic for many days. William was allowed to take his Sunday clothes into every-day wear, and a new suit was ordered for him; and the whole of the next fortnight he spent in acquiring elementary knowledge, and in exhibiting to Jack, every leave-day, the progress he had made.

At the end of the fortnight the new term commenced. William kissed his mother and sisters, and, with a joyful heart, ran off to the University; thinking, as he went, that it was a great deal pleasanter to be going to school, than to be standing behind a counter: and it was with a beating, but yet with a proud heart, that he, when the school-roll was called over, answered to the name of Walsingham—" *adsum.*"

Mary, as we said before, had frequently assisted her mother in the shop. She was a tall, well-grown, and remarkably handsome girl, very womanly in appearance, and of very quiet, elegant manners. Everybody admired her, and many came purposely to look at her, or be served by her.

Mrs. Walsingham soon became aware of the circumstance, and, knowing how dangerous such

admiration might be to her daughter, determined immediately to remove her from it

“Do not ask Grace to serve in the shop, dearest mother,” said Mary, as the three were talking family affairs over.

“Oh do not, mother!” exclaimed Grace, with nervous excitement—“I never could do it. I will net purses, do worsted-work, work satin-stitch, open-hem, embroider, braid, design patterns—or do any thing except serve in the shop.”

“You shall never be asked to do it, my love,” said her mother. And the grateful girl, touched by what she thought another proof of her mother’s kindness, sate down with redoubled industry, to the beautiful work in which she excelled.

A few days after, Mrs. Spenser, who from the first had remained Mrs. Walsingham’s firm friend, came in, and asked to have some private conversation with her. She wished to know, she said, if she intended her eldest daughter to remain in the shop. No, she was not likely to be in it again, Mrs. Walsingham replied. Mrs. Spenser was very glad. Had she any decided plans for her daughter? Not for the present; the removing her from the shop was only a late determination.

“Will your daughter spend this evening with me?” asked Mrs. Spenser, after a moment

pause; "I shall be quite alone." Mrs. Walsingham was quite sure it would give her daughter great pleasure; and at six o'clock, accordingly—for she was to go very early—Mary, dressed in her very best—in her new dark-blue silk frock, the most expensive dress she had ever had—set out for Russell Square. It was with some little excitement of spirit that she set out; for an invitation, even to tea, in those days was a very great event. As Mary, in her unornamented dress, with her rich, abundant, dark hair plainly braided, and her calm, self-possessed demeanour, entered the spacious and handsomely furnished drawing-room, Mrs. Spenser thought she had seldom seen a more prepossessing girl. Mary Walsingham was, in fact, the very counterpart of her mother in her younger days: but of that Mrs. Spenser knew nothing.

Mary, although she looked calm, did not feel quite so. She had hitherto seen Mrs. Spenser as the kind patron of themselves, humble tradespeople; they were thankful, grateful to her, nay, they even loved her; but they had never ceased to feel that she was rich and they poor; that she was placed infinitely above them in station, and that, perhaps, any sentiment stronger than that of obligation, might be thought impertinent; and now, here was she, the very girl who had sold her

cambric handkerchiefs, and even things as humble as pins and knitting-cotton, sitting on the same sofa, and talking unbonnetted to her, face to face! This feeling, however, soon passed away; and Mary forgot that Mrs. Spenser was so much richer, was so much higher in station than themselves. A great variety of topics was conversed upon, and Mary, shrewd as she was, never suspected that Mrs. Spenser was testing her in many ways; that she was fathoming her general knowledge, sounding her principles, and discovering her sentiments on the most important points. Had Mary known this, perhaps she might not have passed through the ordeal as unexceptionably as she did.

“And now, Miss Walsingham,” said Mrs. Spenser, “I will be frank with you: I was not altogether disinterested when I requested the pleasure of your company. I had an object in view, in which my own interest was entirely concerned. I have one little daughter.” Mary said she had seen her very often. “She has hitherto,” continued Mrs. Spenser, “had only a daily governess; but we wish rather for a resident one—one whose manners and principles we may have an opportunity of knowing thoroughly. You are young, Miss Walsingham—younger than I supposed—

but of that fault you would mend every day," said she, kindly.

"And did you indeed think of me, as Miss Spenser's governess?" asked Mary, scarcely able to keep down her emotion.

"I have thought of it for some time, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Spenser, "but I sincerely desire it now."

Mary looked at Mrs. Spenser with her eyes full of tears, but she could not speak.

"You are inexperienced in teaching, perhaps," continued Mrs. Spenser; "but as my little daughter is not yet six years old, not much book-learning is required. You shall have every opportunity of improving yourself."

Mary expressed her gratitude in few, but efficient words.

"My dear," said Mrs. Spenser, "society owes much to a woman like your mother, who has not only passed through a life of peculiar trial and hardship unblemished, but who has set an example of almost every virtue. Your mother, my dear, has already more nobly deserved a statue than many a hero; and no great merit is due to such as I, who only do a little to make her path easier."

Mary again could not speak ; and the moment after, her brother William was announced, who, as had been arranged, was come to fetch her home.

That was a joyful going home ; and the happy, thankful family remained round the fire after midnight—there was so much to be said, and so much to be arranged.

“ It is a pleasant thing,” said Grace, “ to build castles in the air, but a far pleasanter thing to find real castles built, and ready furnished for you, as you have done to-night, Mary. I am sure I am very glad, for you quite deserve it, and you will fulfil all Mrs. Spenser’s expectations.”

“ I hope so,” replied Mary.

“ You *will*,” returned Grace : “ only think how well you do every thing, how thoroughly you succeed in all your attempts, and how much you know ; yet you never seemed to be learning—you had no time for it ! But, after all, mother,” continued Grace, turning to Mrs. Walsingham, “ I am glad Mrs. Spenser did not fix upon me ; I could never have fulfilled her expectations.”

“ And for that very reason, my dear,” replied her mother, “ Mrs. Spenser would not have fixed on you for such an office.”

“ Ah,” said Grace, sorrowfully, “ I shall always be the least useful one of the family !”

“ You undervalue yourself, my dear,” said her mother.

“ Think of all that exquisite work which you have done,” said Mary.

“ Of all those purses and bags, and bead-work, and embroidery, and braiding,” added William, each anxious to raise poor Grace in her own estimation. Grace made no answer; but she sighed, well knowing, though she would not confess it, that every kind of work which had been enumerated as among her good gifts, had long since been distasteful to her; and, so that she might have studied Italian and our best English poetry and literature, and employed herself in drawing, she would contentedly have lived on bread and water.

Mary was soon happily established in her new home, and twelve months more went on prosperously with the widow and her family. William had lost his thin, pale-faced, anxious look, which, in fact, had only been the consequence of an over-tasked mind and an extremely anxious spirit. He had become ten times more studious than ever, and was as happy as the day was long. He advanced rapidly in his classes, and brought home, at the close of each term, the highest credentials of merit. Mr. Spenser took the warm-

est and most friendly interest in him; and, when he had been rather more than two years at school—on his seventeenth birthday, in fact—he was admitted as junior clerk in Mr. Spenser's counting-house; an event which filled the widow's heart and house with gladness.

We must now go back a year and a half at least, and return to Grace, who henceforth will be the principal character in our little history.

CHAPTER XIII.

SECRET SCHEMES.

As Mrs. Walsingham's circumstances improved, she became anxious that Grace, who seemed the only one unbenefited by them, should share some of their advantages as well as the other members of the family. But Grace, in many respects, was peculiar; she was a being extraordinarily gifted, and, under prosperous circumstances, would have been the flattered, courted, and, probably, the spoiled child of genius: her character, too, would have been transparent as water; but, chilled as

she had insensibly been by early poverty, by witnessing the privations, and, often, the concealed suffering of those most dear to her, she had learned to veil her own feelings, and even while indulging an almost morbid sensitiveness of spirit, wearing outwardly an appearance of coldness and reserve. Her father, had he lived, would perfectly have understood her, but he would have been far from the best guide for a being so constituted. Grace, though she had neither fear nor distrust of her mother, dreaded so much the adding to her difficulties, or the receiving an over proportion of indulgence or consideration from her, that she never made her her confidant; and although she loved her elder brother and sister, and had the most profound respect for them, yet they were never admitted to her most secret feelings. It was Jack—the gay, volatile, light-hearted Jack, two years her junior—that was the closest intimate of her heart. Two beings more dissimilar could hardly be conceived; Grace, slender, and of a marble paleness, with soft brown hair, straight and glossy as silk, and limbs of the most delicate mould—all ideality, and filled with notions of beauty and perfection; Jack, strong-built, strong-featured, and rough-headed; a bold, free-spoken youth, that seemed to laugh all sen-

timent to scorn, and from whom it might have been thought no tender sympathies could ever have been extracted. It was by him, and him only, that Grace was thoroughly known, and to him only that she freely opened her heart.

When Mrs. Walsingham proposed that Grace should have the advantage of school, she at once shrunk from it. "No, mother," said she, "I am too old, too tall to go to school."

"You thought differently in William's case, my love," argued her mother.

"William was very different to me," she replied; "I could not bear—indeed, mother, I could not—the way in which I should be treated at a first-rate school; and I had better be at home," she added, timidly, "than go to an inferior one."

Her mother quite agreed in that opinion.

"Do you not know, mother," asked Grace, half reluctantly, "the ungenerous feeling, the want of sympathy, there is among women generally, and among girls, too, I suppose? I mean, that those who fancy themselves richer and greater, despise those they think below them—such as ourselves," said she, with a faltering voice.

"But, my dear," replied her mother, "while we preserve our own self-respect, we are almost independent of the opinions of others."

“That must depend, in great measure, on our own natures,” said Grace. “I could not bear all you do, dearest mother,” continued she, “from people considering themselves perfect ladies; they are so imperious often—so little considerate of your feelings; and if ladies behave thus to you, mother, whom everybody respects, and whose real goodness everybody acknowledges, how is it likely that ignorant girls, full of their own importance, and with all their educated notions of wealth and station, would behave even civilly to me, a stranger, who would be known to them only as a shopkeeper’s daughter?”

“There may be some truth in what you say, my dear girl,” returned her mother, “but you want charity; your censures are far too sweeping; you forget the kind friends we have found—you forget Dr. Elliott and Mr. and Mrs. Spenser.”

“Yes, mother,” returned Grace, “but those are the exceptions. Were the world made up of Dr. Elliotts and Mrs. Spensers, we should hardly wish to go to heaven: but, dearest mother, as to my going to school, do not think of it. I have plenty of time at home for the few studies I care about.”

“You shall have lessons in French and Italian,” returned her mother, “from good Mr. Hamilton,

and you shall have a little time also for your own reading. It is but fair that you should reap some advantage from our amended circumstances, particularly when you have done your part towards their amendment."

Grace kissed her mother's cheek, and thanked her again and again for her kindness.

"Well, but, Grace," said Jack, one fine evening during the Midsummer holidays, as they were walking in the Regent's Park together, "you are low-spirited—you ought to think better of yourself. There's nothing like having a good conceit of ourselves—I soon found that out."

"But you don't at all understand," said Grace; "I only say, that many things make me low-spirited, that others would not mind about at all. Now, you know, I ought to help mother—and I will. But, oh Jack, you don't know how I loathe that trumpery satin-stitch and embroidery, and how often I feel to despise women, because they think so much about dress. I wear nothing but these plain cambric collars myself, because I hate those worked ones."

"But," replied her brother, "you admire every pretty pattern, and everything that is elegant and graceful; and everybody says there never was **such beautiful work as yours.** Didn't mother

say, this very morning, that there was another order for another dozen of babies' caps?"

"Yes, brother," said Grace, "and I could not eat another morsel after I had heard it. I sometimes think that I will leave off inventing patterns; but, then, it would be wicked not to help mother to the utmost; and, now William's at the University, and Margaret is going to school, and now I take French and Italian lessons, I know that I ought to work even harder than ever. I declare, Jack," said she, weeping, "I often pray that God would enable me to do my duty cheerfully, for it is the doing it cheerfully that is the great thing, after all!"

"I wish I could help you in some way," said Jack.

"You do help me," was her reply; "for it is the greatest comfort I have to take these pleasant evening walks with you, now you are at home every day, and to open my whole heart to you."

"Grace," commenced Jack, cheerfully, as if a new set of ideas had taken possession of his mind, "if you might have just what you liked, and be just what you liked, what would you be? Very rich, I suppose, wouldn't you? and have a grand house, somewhere in a grand park, with plenty of

deer; and servants, and carriages, and horses; and pictures, and statues, and a deal of music; and fine folks to visit you? Would that please you?"

"Not quite, I think," returned Grace, "though I should like the grand house and the pictures, and statues and music, and books, Jack, which you have forgotten."

"You wouldn't do any more satin-stitch or embroidery, I guess?" said Jack.

"No," replied Grace, "I would forbid anybody ever to mention the words before me; and I don't think I should ever touch a needle again as long as I lived."

"You would do famously," said Jack, "in that island where ready-made shirts, with buttons and button-holes, plaited frills and all, grow upon the trees!"

"I should be a very princess there," replied Grace, "and I would do nothing then but read and draw. And, by the bye, did I show you my little etching on copper?"

"It has turned out well, has it?" asked Jack.

"I think so," said Grace, "for a first attempt; I should never despair of quite succeeding, if I **had** only time. How useful that *Encyclopædia* **has** been to us."

“And yet it was the satin-stitch that helped you to buy it,” said Jack.

“I have a notion,” said Grace, “without noticing her brother’s observation, “that if I had only the time to practise, I should succeed very well; but I should prefer wood-engraving—I understand it so entirely: and my attempt was really not despicable.”

“No,” said Jack, “I think it was capital.”

“But, you know,” continued Grace, “I should never be satisfied to devote as much time as would be needful to any art of this kind, while mother had to struggle with difficulties.”

“And yet I think,” said her brother, “if she only knew how you hated this stitch, stitch, stitching, she would not object to your giving it up; and, in the end, you might get a deal of money by engraving. I know two boys, whose father is an engraver, and they walk the streets with a livery-servant after them.”

“But,” said Grace, “it is not common for women to be engravers.”

“Fiddlestick-end!” said Jack, “if that’s all the objection.”

“Not quite all,” replied Grace; “but mother might think it a wild experiment, and, perhaps, think me unkind, in not helping her still in the

way that seems most natural; and I heard her say, this very morning, what advantage it would be to her to keep lace of the most expensive kinds, and in greater variety; and that she had lost one of her best customers, because she could not supply her with such lace, but that she should not think it right to keep it at present, because she had not sufficient capital. Now, if I were to leave off doing that fine work, mother must hire others to do it, which would lessen her profits, and I, the while, should be making continual demands upon her. If I had only any little way of gaining money independently of the fine work, that I would lay out for myself, and then I would design, and etch, and engrave to my heart's content."

"I wish you could," said Jack: and these few emphatic words brought them again to their own door.

"I want you to have a walk with me, Grace," said Jack, on his first leave-day, about a week after the holidays were closed. Grace was sitting at her work-table, busied over the last baby's cap of the dozen which had been ordered. "I'll put all these things by for you, for I'm in a prodigious hurry; I want to have some particular conversation with you."

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Grace was very quick, for she longed to be out in the fresh air; and she was curious, besides, to know what important topic Jack had in his mind.

He linked his ungloved hand into her arm, and the moment they had left the door he began: "I really have found something that you can do, and get a deal of money by, too—something quite in your own way; and you may go on with the fine work at the same time, and nobody else know anything about it at present, but you and me; and then, if it doesn't succeed—but it will succeed, and so I won't fancy anything else."

"But what is it, dear brother?" interrupted Grace.

"You know all about calico-printing," said Jack; "printing ladies' dresses—those beautiful muslins."

"No, indeed, I know nothing about it," replied Grace.

"Nonsense!" said he; "you know that those beautiful patterns are all drawn first upon paper; and very clever people—sometimes artists—design them, and a great deal of money is often paid for first-rate patterns, and many people get their living by doing nothing else but designing and drawing patterns."

“And you think I could design and draw them?” asked Grace.

“I’m sure of it,” he replied; “you could do it beautifully—I should not wonder if you got twenty guineas for one design.”

“Impossible!” said Grace; “twenty guineas can never be given for a single pattern.”

“But it is!” said Jack. “Now, I know a boy, his name is Ferrand, and his father does nothing else but design patterns. He lives at Mr. Aukland’s print-works. I have been often at his house, for Dick and I are rather cronies; and I have been all over the printing-works, and I understand exactly how everything is done.”

“But in what kind of way are these patterns drawn?” asked Grace.

“Very nicely drawn, and coloured exactly;—but, dear me,” said Jack, interrupting himself, “I’ve three or four in my pocket that I begged, for I thought of you directly.”

“You are a dear, kind creature,” said Grace.

Jack produced the patterns. “You see,” said he, “they are made to look exactly as they are meant to be; but these are nothing extraordinary—quite common things, that they set no store by.”

“The patterns are nothing,” said Grace, “but they are all I need.”

“ Mr. Ferrand said,” continued Jack, “ **that** they were always wanting new patterns, and **that** they would give any money for something very original for next spring, because printed muslins were to be all the rage. I told him I knew a young person—I didn’t say lady—that would do him some better things than he had ever seen, and that I would bring him some. He seemed very much pleased, and asked me to have some brandy-and-water with him.”

“ But you did not, I hope,” interrupted Grace.

“ No, I didn’t drink any,” said Jack, “ I only sipped at the glass; and he told me he used to design a great many himself, but that of late his hand had been out.”

Grace thanked her brother sincerely, and promised that she would try what she could do. The next morning she was up early, and, instead of either reading Italian or French, as had been her custom, sate down to catch and realize, if she could, some of the phantom designs which had floated through her brain, even in her dreams. It was several days before she produced anything that at all satisfied herself; but after that time she began to design rapidly, one combination suggesting another entirely different. Some were formal Chinese-like things, all angles and interlacings—a gorgeous mass of colour; others, light floating

sprays and blossoms, like gossamer threads and nodding flowers, heavy with dew. She grew delighted with her own work, and, full of confidence, went on with amazing success. There was one particular pattern, however, which she considered worth all the rest, for its originality of design, and bold, yet faultless, colouring. She tried again and again, but to her judgment could produce nothing at all equal to it. She called it the acanthus-pattern, because the first idea was suggested, though she hardly knew how, by an acanthus-leaf upon a Grecian capital, among the marbles of the British Museum. and that particular leaf, most accurately sketched, continued in the design. Jack was with her at the time she sketched the leaf; and one little fact connected with that circumstance made it memorable. But more of that in its place.

Twelve of Grace's best designs, and the acanthus-pattern, of course, among them, were carried by Jack, on his next holiday, to Mr. Ferrand, who in the interim had, through his son, reminded him of his promise.

"Now I have brought you something," said he, opening the little portfolio, in which Grace had carefully laid the designs; "you never saw such as these, Mr. Ferrand."

Jack arranged them on the table, as he thought most advantageously. "What do you say to them, Mr. Ferrand?" asked he, as that person delayed to give an opinion, though he could not conceal his surprise.

"I say," said he, "that I have seen worse, and I may have seen better; but all depends upon trial," added he, gathering them up.

"But, stop," said Jack, seizing the acanthus, "is not that a beauty?"

"It's not an ugly thing," replied Mr. Ferrand, coolly.

"What may such a design as that be worth?" asked Jack.

"A matter of ten or fifteen shillings," said the other.

"Ten or fifteen shillings!" repeated Jack; "why, Mr. Ferrand, there is not such a design as that in all Mr. Aukland's works; and you said you would give any money for some original designs."

"Pho! Pho!" said Mr. Ferrand; "but come, here's two sovereigns for you, for the whole batch of them; and I can't stand argufying," added he, taking up his hat, and dropping the designs very deliberately into his pocket.

"The designs are not mine," said Jack, think-

ing Mr. Ferrand meant to be dishonest, "and I brought them neither to give, nor yet to sell, at this rate!"

"Pocket your two sovereigns, and be off with you," said Ferrand, growing red in the face.

"You are not behaving at all like a gentleman," said Jack, doggedly, but without touching the money.

"Will you take these, and be off with you?" said the other, again putting the sovereigns towards him.

"No," said Jack, "but I'll have the designs back again."

"Will you?" exclaimed Ferrand, now growing pale with passion; "we'll see, then!" and, taking Jack by the shoulders, and not very gently either, he turned him out of the house.

Poor Jack! In the whole course of his life he had never been in such a passion as he was then. "He's the shabbiest scoundrel in all London," said he, as, in the very childishness of his rage, he flung a stone against the black wooden gates within which Mr. Ferrand's house stood.

"And what shall I say to poor Grace?" thought **he**, when the first ebullition of his anger was over; and, from having walked with impetuous speed, **he** now relaxed into a saunter. "What a fine

fellow I shall seem to her, after all the swagger I made about the money she was to get, and which she *ought* to have got; for there never were such beautiful designs seen! I've a good mind to go to Mr. Aukland myself," said he, speaking aloud, in the very energy of his perplexity, "and tell him all about it; for that Ferrand is a downright shabby, swindling fellow!"

"Thy language is somewhat free for thy years," said a calm voice behind, which made Jack suddenly turn round. It was a middle-aged Quaker, who, in his plain brown suit, and well-varnished brown walking-cane, was leisurely bending his steps towards some anti-slavery or Bible meeting.

"And no wonder, sir," said Jack, in reply to his observation, "for I have been shamefully swindled."

"What may thy case be?" asked the Friend.

Jack told him exactly, and about the acanthus-pattern also, and concluded by saying, that "Ferrand was the greatest swindler in all London."

"Thou certainly hast not been well-used," replied the Friend, "if those designs of which thou speakest are worth more than the two sovereigns."

"They are worth ten times that money, sir," said Jack, with emphasis.

"See the man again," said the Quaker, "and

calmly represent to him the injustice of his conduct; but be calm, my young friend," said he, laying his hand kindly on Jack's shoulder, "for anger produces nothing but evil; and if he still refuse to restore thee either thy property or its true value, thou shouldst see John Aukland, this person's employer; he is an upright man, and will not see injustice done to thee. And, further, I advise thee," said the Friend, beginning to quicken his pace, "to moderate thy temper. Go home now, and tell thy sister of this man's unfair conduct; and if she be, as thou sayest, so excellent and so amiable, she will not blame thee. Farewell!"

Jack thought there was good sense in what the Quaker advised, and, accordingly, calming himself into as much stoical philosophy as he was capable of, he related to Grace the end of this grand scheme. Grace did not belie the character which Jack had given of her, for she did not blame him; on the contrary, she assumed an indifference which she did not feel, and, both by word and manner, did all in her power to reconcile poor Jack to himself.

In a week or two, on his very first leave-day, he went again to Mr. Ferrand, and inquired after the designs, with as much politeness as he could

possibly assume. Mr. Ferrand far more than equalled him in civility; he apologized for his former rudeness; he was sorry he had used violence towards him. As to the designs, they had turned out absolutely nothing; there was no judging of a design in paper; every one must be tried with the blocks and proper dyes, before an opinion could be formed of its worth; not one design out of ten worked well on the calico. Upon his honour, he assured Jack, that not one of them was worth a farthing; but he had not time then to spare. Jack was confounded by his civil wordiness, but he did not believe even his protestations; before, however, he could frame an answer, Mr. Ferrand was gone.

Outside the gate was a gentleman alighting from his phaeton. "Was it Mr. Aukland?" inquired Jack; for he thought, spite of Mr. Ferrand's polite protestations, he would take the Quaker's advice, and relate the whole affair to him. "Was it," he asked, "Mr. Aukland?" The answer was affirmative. The moment Jack spoke of designs, Mr. Aukland referred him to Mr. Ferrand—he was the proper person, and to him he must go. "But"—said Jack. "These are matters I have nothing to do with," interrupted Mr. Aukland, impatiently; "I cannot be detained." Mr. Auk-

land bustled through the black gates, the groom leisurely drove the phaeton down the street, and Jack walked away more discontented than ever.

CHAPTER XIV.

LA BELLE FLORA.

As month after month rolled on, if Grace thought less of her disappointed hopes, she found that any chance of emancipation from the needle was more distant than ever; for her satin-stitch and embroidery grew more in demand every day. Mrs. Walsingham often thought Grace was too closely confined, and she devised many little schemes of pleasure, many little excursions into the country, to diversify, as much as might be, the monotonous life of her daughter. Several young women, it is true, were now associated with Grace in her tasks; but as she had no talent for instructing others, each was left to her own abilities, and, as might be expected, not one equalled her. Mrs. Walsingham's customers, therefore, soon learned to distinguish her work from that of all others; and, had poor Grace, like the goddess of the

Ephesians, been gifted with six hands instead of two, she might fully have employed them all.

"Now, Mrs. Walsingham," said that same Mrs. Aukland, who, in the early days of the little shop, had triumphantly carried off the damaged doll at less than its prime cost, and who had just now alighted from her carriage, "I want another velvet dress for my Augustus, embroidered in gold thread." Mrs. Walsingham bowed her thanks.

"But I must have a perfectly original design—something very striking, and very new," said the lady.

"I have no doubt of our pleasing you," replied Mrs. Walsingham.

"The last dress that he had," the lady continued, "was the sweetest thing I ever saw; many gentlemen, artists, noticed it, and pronounced the style perfect."

"And you now wish for something quite unlike this?" inquired Mrs. Walsingham.

"Of a style quite dissimilar," said the lady, "for though that dress is still as good as new, it has been so imitated by everybody, that I cannot bear to see the child in it. It is so very impertinent of people to imitate one!"

Mrs. Walsingham suggested that it might be taken as a compliment, and then proceeded to lay

several of Grace's newest designs for such work before her. She did not quite approve of any of these; she wanted something very different—very striking and original. “And, remember, Mrs. Walsingham,” said she, “that I purchase the pattern, which is to be destroyed the moment it is done with.”

It was then agreed that fresh patterns were to be designed, and sent by post for her choice. Two guineas were to be paid for the embroidering, and two also for the pattern; and Mrs. Walsingham was to furnish the velvet and gold thread. These important preliminaries being thus arranged, the lady passed forth to her splendid carriage. During Easter week, Jack had the pleasure of morning strolls through the streets of London, with the joyful prospect of dining at home each day. Towards noon, however, on the Thursday, he came in with a very hurried air, and begged Grace would go with him into Regent Street, for that he had something very strange to show her. Not a word could Grace obtain from her brother, as to the object of their walk; “it was a something,” he said, “which was worth seeing.”

“And now,” said he, “as he suddenly stopped **before** a fashionable shop, the windows of which

were filled with dresses of the newest spring fashions, "what do you see there?" Grace made a rapid survey, and then, with a sudden start, exclaimed, "The acanthus-pattern! and how beautiful it is!"

"And what a false-hearted scoundrel that was!" exclaimed he, losing all sense of the beauty of the pattern in his extreme indignation.

"It *must* be my own design," said Grace, thoughtfully, "for no one else would conceive exactly the same idea!"

"It's your own, and nobody else's," said Jack; "and I'll tell you why: don't you remember sketching it that night at the British Museum—and the little mouse's face in the middle of the acanthus leaf?"

"Yes," said Grace, smiling, "and there it is, to be sure!"

"And you threw that scarlet flower, that erymocarpos across it, and I declared that it still peeped through—and so it does, though nobody but you or I would find it out."

"Yes," said Grace, "it must be my design."

"I'm confident it is!" said Jack; "but, to make assurance sure, I'll go in and ask whose print it is."

The people of the shop were not busy just

then; and, as Jack put his question to the gentleman of the shop, he received a direct and **very** civil answer. It was, the shop-keeper said, one of Aukland's, and would be, he expected, the most fashionable print of the season. It was called la belle Flora. A dress of it had already been worn by the Queen; but that this was the first day it had been shown in the shops. Jack expressed his thanks, and ran out to communicate what he had heard to his sister.

"And now," said he, "what had best be done? "for that fellow shall not have the credit of la belle Flora to himself."

"We must tell mother all about it," replied Grace, "for she is the properest person to give us good counsel. But, dear me, it will be no use making any disturbance about it, for we shall never get any good by it: but still it is a great satisfaction to see that I have succeeded so well, and that the very pattern which pleased me so much, is likely to be a general favourite!"

"I tell you what," said Jack, "if there's justice to be had in London, we'll have it!—and don't you be chicken-hearted now;—that's the fault every body blames women for," said he, half vexed. Grace laughed, and called him her "**Cœur de Lion.**"

When they got home, they found their mother closely occupied by a constant succession of important customers; there seemed no chance of them two being able to speak a word with her before evening. "I'm completely out of patience," said Jack, as he went away from the door of his mother's room; "she'll never be at liberty!" At length, however, the door opened, and three ladies, accompanied by his mother, came out. Jack stole softly into the shop after them, intending to secure his mother the moment they were gone. But the lady who had ordered the embroidered velvet dress was alighting from her own carriage, and had entered the shop before Jack had spoken a single word. "I shall not detain you many minutes, Mrs. Walsingham," said the lady; "and I will remain here, thank you." Jack saw instantly that she wore a dress of la belle Flora pattern, and he stole softly outside the counter, to get a nearer survey.

"You like these designs, I hope," said Mrs. Walsingham, taking them from the lady's hand.

"They are all exquisite—the sweetest things I ever saw," replied she; "but this is my choice."

"It is certainly very striking," said Mrs. Walsingham, "and will produce great effect."

"I cannot think," said the lady, "how you get

such things made; and then the work itself is so perfect! Do you employ the Jewesses?"

"Frequently," she replied; "but these designs are made, and this particular work is done, by my daughter."

"Indeed!" said the lady, "she must be wonderfully clever!"

"That she is!" exclaimed Jack, suddenly presenting himself, to the no small astonishment of his mother and the lady; "and she invented the pattern of that beautiful print which you are wearing."

"Impossible!" said the lady, half laughing.

"But indeed, ma'am, she did," said Jack, not standing on ceremony, even with a rich lady—"only she has been swindled out of it!"

"You are a most impertinent boy," returned the lady, "for this print, which is the most fashionable print of the season, was invented by a French gentleman, of the name of Du Roc."

"They may say so," returned Jack, steadily; "and they call it, I know, la belle Flora; but my own sister Grace herself, and nobody else, designed it, and she called it the acanthus-pattern."

"This is very extraordinary behaviour, Mrs. Walsingham," said the lady, looking very much insulted. "Pray, who is this boy?"

"He is my son," returned Mrs. Walsingham; "and the facts which I now hear are quite as extraordinary to myself as to you."

"The *facts!*" repeated the lady—"the *falsehoods*, Mrs. Walsingham; for this print belongs to my husband, Mr. Aukland, the great calico-printer; and every word which this boy has spoken is a gross falsehood!"

"I trust not," returned Mrs. Walsingham—"at all events, not wilfully false. But, how is this, John?" said she, turning to him, "for I never heard that Grace had designed any patterns for printing."

"No, mother," returned he, "you never did; nobody ever knew, but Grace and myself, and Mr. Ferrand, and some old Quaker gentleman; but whom I do not know: but we were going to tell you all about it directly; for they've got the pattern printed, as you see, and Grace has been swindled out of it; and now they give it a fine French name, and say it was invented by a Frenchman!"

"There must be some mistake about it, John," said his mother; "this, most likely, is not the pattern which Grace designed."

"It is, indeed, mother," returned he, earnestly; "for I know the pattern as well as if I had drawn it myself!"

“ Unless some apology is made for the extreme impertinence of that boy,” said Mrs. Aukland, “ I shall not again enter this shop!”

“ I understand the whole affair so imperfectly,” replied Mrs. Walsingham, with great composure, “ that I am not able to judge if he be really as blameable as you suppose.”

“ Every word he has uttered,” returned she, “ is false!” And then, giving orders that the velvet dress should be finished, without fail, in two days, she drove off in extreme indignation.

Quite unperceived by all the party, an old gentleman had entered the shop while this circumstance occurred, and he stood a quiet listener to the conversation that passed. He was a stout old gentleman, with a merry eye, and had been an early and constant purchaser of Mrs. Walsingham’s nice lamb’s-wool stockings. The moment Mrs. Aukland was gone, he burst into a loud fit of laughter, and, clapping Jack on the back, called him a fine fellow, and said that, like John Knox, he was not afraid of the fair face of a gentleman.

“ Sir,” replied Jack, “ I knew I was right.”

“ That’s a fine spirit,” said the old gentleman; “ stand up for the right as bold as a lion! But I’ll tell you what, my stout fellow, you’ve got into a

hornet's nest—this Aukland is a fiery chap, and his lady seems a bit of a tartar: but, however, if your sister really did invent that new-fashioned print, that all the world is going mad about, she can do something else, perhaps, as good."

"I am sure, sir, she could," replied Jack.

"Then here's my hand, my fine fellow; I'm a sort of calico-printer myself—that is, it's in the family—and if you'll send me a score of designs, only half as good as this fine French thing, I'll make it worth your while."

"I'll bring them, sir," said Jack; "but what's your address?"

"Take them to Wells and Wilson's, the calico-printers, and ask for Mr. Matthew Wilson, any day between ten and two; I live at the next house, and I'll see you."

"Thank you, sir," said Jack; and, running up stairs to communicate all his news to Grace, he left Mr. Matthew Wilson and his mother to do their business about the lamb's-wool stockings.

CHAPTER XV.

DIFFICULTIES.

Mrs. AUKLAND soon communicated to her husband the circumstance which had occurred in Mrs. Walsingham's shop, and how this most insolent of Blue-coat School boys declared his sister to have invented la belle Flora; and that, in the public shop, before she knew not how many shop-women and customers, he insisted that his sister had been swindled out of it. Mr. Aukland, as Mr. Matthew Wilson had said, was a gentleman of a hot temper, and he instantly inquired *who* had swindled her out of the pattern. "Yourself, of course," returned his wife. "The varlet," muttered Mr. Aukland, and, getting up, he pulled the bell violently. "Bid John take the first omnibus," said he to the footman who answered the bell, "and go and tell Mr. Ferrand, at the works, to come up to me instantly. Let him tell Mr. Ferrand to take a cab, and lose no time."

Mr. Ferrand, having lost no more time than was necessary to get rid of the fumes of the brandy which he was drinking when the message

arrived, made his appearance. "What a monstrous time you are in getting up here," said Mr. Aukland, who, having questioned and cross-questioned his wife, found himself in an ill-humour with everybody. Mr. Ferrand, with all humility, protested that he had not lost a moment, and that he had even paid an extra sixpence to the cab-driver, to make speed.

"Where did you get the design of la belle Flora?" asked Mr. Aukland. Ferrand was confounded at the abruptness of the question; but, after a moment's pause, he replied, that he had it from one Du Roc, who lodged in Leicester Square.

"I remember you said so: that man I must see," said his superior.

"Nothing easier, sir," replied Ferrand, supposing that Mr. Aukland was thinking of fresh designs.

"There is a family of the name of Walsingham: do you know them?" asked Mr. Aukland.

Ferrand felt almost as if a thunderbolt had struck him; and, uncertain how much his employer knew of the la belle Flora affair, he dared not venture upon a direct answer. "Walsingham?" said he, as if considering with himself. "Yes," said Mr. Aukland, "the mother keeps a haberdasher's shop, or something of that kind."

The tone of his patron's voice reassured Ferrand, and he fearlessly replied, "I know now, sir, who you mean. One of the boys is in the Blue-coat School."

"Have you, at any time," asked Mr. Aukland, "received any designs for printed muslins from that boy, said to be done by his sister?"

"Never!" returned Ferrand. "That boy has had old designs from me: I took rather a fancy to him at one time, and he used to come a good deal about the place; but he grew so impertinent at last, that I was obliged to order him off the premises. I have not seen him there since that time."

"Stop," said Mr. Aukland, putting his forefinger to his temple, "don't I remember a Blue-coat School boy stopping me at the gate, to ask something about designs which he had brought?"

"Which he wanted to beg, sir, far more likely, if you will excuse me interrupting you," said Ferrand, anxious to pervert the fact in his patron's memory; "to *beg*, I will be bound to say, for he was always begging patterns."

"It might be to beg," said Mr. Aukland;—"this boy, however, claims now the invention of *la belle Flora* for his sister, and declares publicly that she has been swindled out of it by some of us."

"I would be sorry to injure a widow's son,"

said Ferrand; "but that boy will come to the gallows if he does not mind what he is about: but as to the swindling, sir, of course he means that for me; and, if you will give me leave, I will take the matter into my own hands. I will see the boy myself, and stop his mouth."

"I will thank you to do so, Mr. Ferrand," said his employer: "and you tell his mother from me, that I will have her son prosecuted if I hear of his mentioning another word on the subject!"

"I will, sir," was Mr. Ferrand's reply; and, glad to escape, but yet filled with apprehension, he went back to his own house.

Early the next morning, Ferrand went to the Blue-coat School, desiring to speak with Walsingham.

"Now, my good fellow," began he, in a tone of friendly reproof, "you have got us into a pretty scrape about that design of your sister's!"

"I?" said Jack.

"Yes, you! talking about swindling, and all that nonsense, as if one did not mean to do the handsome thing by you."

"Was it handsome," replied Jack, "to tell me the patterns were not worth a farthing; and then, when that famous one was printed, go and say a Frenchman had done it? Was that handsome, Mr. Ferrand?"

"But, my dear fellow," said Ferrand, "this fa-

mous la belle Flora is *not* your sister's design: I grant you it was taken from it."

"It is the very same!" asserted Jack, stoutly, twisting his shoulder from Ferrand's hand; "I know it by the mouse's face!"

"By the what?" asked Ferrand.

"A private mark we set upon it," replied Jack.

"A private fiddlestick!" returned Ferrand: "but come, I know you are a lad of spirit; here is five pounds for you, and do not say another word about it!"

"I scorn your five pounds!" said Jack.

"Hark ye," returned Ferrand, not a little alarmed at Jack's steadfastness, "it will be worse for you if you refuse my offer. I stand between you and Mr. Aukland's displeasure, and he vows to have the whole strength of the law on you for defamation, and your mother must pay damages. It will be the ruin of her!"

"It would break my heart," said Jack, "to bring any trouble on mother. But what have I done, that I need fear Mr. Aukland, or any body else? I only have said what you know to be true; and I'll stick to it—that I will!—and I won't take your five pounds," added he, putting both his hands behind him, as if to remove them from the temptation. Mr. Ferrand swore a fierce oath that

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he would make him repent, and that he would be the ruin of them all ; and then, turning out of the court, stalked swiftly to Leicester Square.

To his friend Du Roc he communicated the untoward circumstance which had occurred ; and it was agreed that Du Roc should acknowledge the idea of la belle Flora to have been derived from a design of Grace Walsingham's, and that a pattern should be drawn, having some resemblance to it, which should be brought forward as hers. This was accordingly done. The paper was assiduously soiled and crumpled, to give it a worn look ; and with this the two set off for the print-works.

Ferrand, with a sufficiently unembarrassed and honest look, told his patron that he had now learned what he was not before aware of, that la belle Flora was in reality originated by a design of very moderate merit, made by this Miss Walsingham, which he supposed her brother had brought, and which, he protested, he had never seen ; and this, he added, explained the boy's speaking to Mr. Aukland on the subject of designs. Du Roc then took up the word, and said, that this design had been brought by young Walsingham one day when he was at Ferrand's ; that he had carried it home with him, and worked out la belle Flora

from it. He had been fortunate enough, he said, to find it, and had now brought it with him. After feeling first in one pocket, and then in another, as if uncertain where he had put a thing of so little value, he drew it forth.

All this seemed straight-forward, and perfectly probable, and Mr. Aukland professed himself satisfied. He then desired Ferrand to take this design to Miss Walsingham, and convince her of her mistake. "And since," added he, "the idea of this successful design was suggested by her, I am not unwilling to give her five or ten guineas: you can arrange it, Ferrand, as you see best; but let her family perfectly understand, that this discharges all obligation on my part; and that I will prosecute any one who couples my name with swindling!"

So far Ferrand thought they had managed admirably, and, taking Du Roc with him, they set out for Mrs. Walsingham's. Ferrand felt that his task here was much more difficult than with Mr. Aukland; but, as it was no use standing on trifles, he must even tell the falsehood boldly, and stick to it.

"You are under a strange mistake about this printed muslin, Miss Walsingham," said he, "as I am sure you will confess in a moment. Your design was not this *la belle Flora*."

“ Indeed, Mr. Ferrand,” replied Grace, firmly, “ it is precisely that which my brother took you.”

“ With your permission,” said Du Roc, “ I will show you your own; or, if it is not your own, that, at least, which gave me the fortunate idea of la belle Flora;” and he presented to her the false design.

“ That,” said Ferrand, “ is the very thing your brother brought to me. I would swear to it in any court in England!”

“ This is no design of mine,” said Grace, handing it to her mother, with a look that expressed her astonishment.

“ Gentlemen,” said Mrs. Walsingham, after she had carefully examined it, “ although I never saw my daughter’s design for the printed muslin, I am convinced that this is not done by her. There is some unjustifiable attempt here; for it is not even the paper we have been in the habit of using.

“ Do ladies always use the same paper?” asked Du Roc, sarcastically: “ might not this be the back of a letter?” Grace said that her finished designs were never made on the backs of letters. Ferrand grew very hot and uneasy, and declared that he would swear to that being the design which young Walsingham had brought.

“ I have four several designs of this pattern,” said Grace, “ from the very first idea to its finished

state, and my own actual knowledge cannot be thus imposed upon."

"Would the young lady permit him the sight of those things?" asked Du Roc. Mrs. Walsingham forbade it. "She was convinced," she said, "that her daughter was the sole designer of the pattern in question, which had been printed from it, unaltered; and these copies should only be produced at a proper opportunity. Ferrand and Du Roc then began to speak together, but Ferrand having the louder voice, surpassed the other. He was ordered, he said, by Mr. Aukland, to forbid any of the family coming near the place; but still, that he was commissioned by that gentleman to offer Miss Walsingham five, or even ten guineas for the idea which had been worked out by another; and that, if it was refused, he would go to law with them, and never rest till he had their last shilling.

Grace turned deadly pale, as she heard the angry man's threat, but her mother was unmoved. She would not allow her daughter, she said, to receive the money, neither did she believe that the threat which had been expressed had proceeded from Mr. Aukland.

The Walsinghams' firmness only made Ferrand more desperate; and, knowing that every thing de-

pended upon his maintaining Du Roc to be the author of la belle Flora, he seized an early opportunity to represent his case as forcibly as possible. The Walsinghams, he said, were even more artful and unprincipled than he had imagined, for that this girl now actually denied that to be her sketch from which the design of Du Roc was made, although it was the very thing which her own brother had brought; that not a word which they said could be believed; and that mother, son, and daughter, were all alike. They had refused the money, he said, no doubt with the intention of extorting a larger sum; but that, if he might presume to give advice, they should not have a farthing now; for that he and Du Roc would swear to la belle Flora in any court, and the Walsinghams could not bring forth a single proof of their right to it. Ferrand's words had their effect, and Mr. Aukland bestowed upon the whole Walsingham family the epithet of swindlers.

Things went on quietly at the print-works for about a week, and Ferrand was beginning to feel quite at his ease again; in the meantime, a little circumstance occurred which we must relate. Mrs. Aukland had a large evening party, at which Master Augustus appeared in the splendidly embroidered dress; but it is not of that we would

particularly speak—only, as we have lost sight of Grace's needlework for several pages, we would just let our readers know that the poor girl had been busied over this same dress the while.

There was a lady among the company wearing a la belle Flora muslin. "You have one of these exquisite dresses!" said another to her. "What a sweet thing it is!" said a third; and the whole company then began talking of la belle Flora. "But have you noticed, Mrs. Aukland," said a young lady, "something very odd in this pattern, beautiful as it is?" She had not—what could it be? "Something so like a mouse's face—the tiniest little face, as if peeping from behind that scarlet flower!" "You saucy girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Aukland, "you really are quite disagreeable!" "What do you think Miss Welwood says, Mr. Aukland?" exclaimed several voices; "she has spied out a mouse's face in la belle Flora!" "The very same thing may be seen in an acanthus leaf on one of the marbles in the British Museum," said a young man of the party, who was a student of the fine arts; "and I declare," added he, examining the pattern, "this very leaf is copied from it; I know it so well, for I have copied it myself: and, notice one thing, Mr. Aukland, if you please—the designer of this pattern has thrown

that flower over it to correct the effect, or defect, if you will; but he could not quite have concealed it without injuring the contour of the leaf; it has been done by a person of fine taste." "Is it fair to inquire the designer, Mr. Aukland?" asked another gentleman. "Perfectly," replied Mr. Aukland; "the designer is a Frenchman of the name of Du Roc." "Well, I would swear to that acanthus leaf any where," said the student. The entrance of Master Augustus in the full glory of his embroidered velvet diverted the thoughts of all from la belle Flora. "Did Du Roc design the elegant style of that embroidery, Mrs. Aukland?" asked the student, when he could make himself heard through the babble of admiring tongues. "What a strange question," said Mrs. Aukland; "what could put it in your head?" The student could not exactly tell, but he had fancied there was a similar spirit in the thing. "Oh no," replied Mrs. Aukland; "and yet it was designed and worked even by the very person who would fain usurp poor Du Roc's glory in that very la belle Flora!" Every one was at once interested and curious. "Yes," she said, "a daughter of Mrs. Walsingham's, in — Street: and, by the bye, Mrs. Digby," said she, turning to an elderly lady, "I am sorry I recommended that woman to

you, for they are all a most artful, unprincipled, impertinent set of people!" She then gave an exaggerated account of Jack's championship for his sister; and then appealed to her husband for his further testimony. He gave it with all the artful colouring of Ferrand's malice, and ended by saying that all the Walsinghams were swindlers.

There are very few who have not pleasure in believing an evil report; and most of Mrs. Aukland's visitors went away, giving entire credit to all which had been spoken to the disadvantage of the widow and her family.

A few days afterwards, Mrs. Digby felt herself compelled, by the remembered glory of the embroidered velvet dress, to order one similar for her grandson.

"But I must have it precisely like little Aukland's," said she, after she had introduced the subject to Mrs. Walsingham. "That is impossible," replied she, "as the pattern was purchased by Mrs. Aukland, and I am bound not to work another precisely the same." "Nonsense, Mrs. Walsingham!" said the lady, "I must have it done! You need not be so scrupulous in disobliging Mrs. Aukland:" and then she narrated all that had been said about la belle Flora and her family at the evening party.

Mrs. Walsingham was shocked and astonished, but she still persisted that she would keep faith with her employers. Mrs. Digby could not understand such punctilious honour in tradespeople; but, as she supposed the artful Mrs. Walsingham had her own interests to serve, and knew what she was about, she countermanded the order, and drove off, intending to call on Mrs. Aukland, and assure her that every word was true which she had spoken about this designing haberdasher.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

BUT we must now return to the time of Du Roc's and Ferrand's visit to Mrs. Walsingham.

No sooner were these two worthies gone, than her first idea was to take counsel with some friend as to the line of conduct which it would be best for her to pursue: but unfortunately Mr. Spenser, the friend who naturally occurred to her mind, had set out with all his family for a summer residence

in France. William was also gone with them as far as Paris, whence he was to proceed to Leghorn, where he was to reside for the next twelve months with Mr. Spenser's agent there. The next best thing, therefore, seemed to be to write to Mr. Auckland himself, and to request an interview. She did so; but his answer was such as Ferand's advice naturally suggested: he treated her offer as a scheme to extort money, and defied her to prove her daughter's claim. But how could that claim be proved? Grace had her four progressive sketches, but in themselves they contained no proof of design anterior to the printing of the muslin itself. There were the eleven other designs which had accompanied the acanthus: if any of them had been printed they might afford some clue; but, after all possible inquiry, none of Mr. Auckland's late prints bore any resemblance to them. Witnesses there were none, for the whole thing had been a secret.

"There is no one in this wide world," said Jack, one holiday, as he sate in counsel with his mother and sister, that could at all be considered a witness but that old Quaker gentleman with whom I talked the day I took the designs to Ferand; but who he is, or whether he even lives in London, I don't know."

"And the Quakers," said Grace, "are all so

much alike, that if you attempt to describe one, you describe the whole sect."

"I'd give any thing to meet him again," said Jack; "for he said he knew Mr. Aukland; and I am sure he would bear his testimony for us."

Mr. Matthew Wilson then presented himself to Mrs. Walsingham's mind; and, as Grace had designed several patterns for him, as he had requested, it was immediately determined that she and Jack should go there, and not only take these, but duplicates of the eleven which had gone with the acanthus to Ferrand, and the four progressive sketches of the acanthus also. From him Mrs. Walsingham thought she could ask counsel; and, as he had spoken of himself as connected with calico-printing, his advice would be still more valuable.

Mrs. Walsingham and her son were taken through a back part of Wells and Wilson's print-factory, into an inner court, where stood Mr. Matthew Wilson's house. The old gentleman was courtesy itself; and at the same time that he made himself very merry at the remembrance of Jack confronting the lady, he listened with the utmost interest to the full relation which Mrs. Walsingham gave him, declaring himself entirely convinced of the justice of their claim. He then sent for patterns of all Aukland's late prints, but

still no resemblance could be found between them and the eleven duplicates. He compared the finished drawing of the acanthus-pattern with the printed la belle Flora, and there was not a shade of difference. He next took up the new designs which Grace had sent for his inspection; he cursorily turned them over, very little to Jack's satisfaction; and, merely giving three or four little nods when he had done, said his brother must see these, and then turned to the subject of more immediate importance. He said that he, however, was not the person to take up their cause with Mr. Aukland: it was his brother's partner, Mr. Wells, who must be enlisted in their service; for that Mr. Aukland and he were on very good terms.

A servant was therefore despatched with a request that Mr. Wells would step in; and in ten minutes' time the identical Quaker, whom Jack had so long looked for in vain, entered.

"Thou and I have met before, I think," said the good man, eyeing him attentively. Jack, overjoyed, declared that they had, and that their meeting now was the most fortunate thing in the world.

The whole affair was then related to him, and his friendly interference solicited. Good Samuel Wells needed not to be solicited twice. He ex-

amined the duplicate designs and the progressive sketches; and then, requesting that every detail might be circumstantially reiterated, that he might have a clear idea of everything, he proposed that Jack should accompany him the next morning to Mr. Aukland's house, "where we will catch him at breakfast, and have him all to ourselves," said the good man.

Jack said to-morrow was not a holiday, nor even a leave-day, and that, therefore, he could not go.

"We'll manage it," said Mr. Wells: "my partner is friendly with some masters in thy school; we will get thee liberated, and I will call for thee at eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

He then wrote to Mr. Aukland, stating the purport of his intended visit, and requesting that, at all events, a patient hearing might be given him. Mr. Aukland, who had his own private motives for not disobliging the rich Quaker, accorded the interview, making up his mind, nevertheless, not to be convinced, and amusing himself with the thought that the shrewd old Quaker was famously gulled.

Mrs. Aukland, who had been late the night before at a party, took her breakfast in her chamber; and Mr. Wells and his companion found

Mr. Aukland quite alone. The subject was introduced, and Mr. Aukland advanced all Ferrand's arguments.

"Thou must now oblige me," said Samuel Wells, "by hearing what I have to say." And he then related his first meeting with Jack, and all that had passed between them at the time. "But thou canst produce," said he to Jack, "those progressive sketches of thy sister's?"

Jack laid them proudly before Mr. Aukland.

"But," said that gentleman, eyeing them carelessly, "these prove nothing: sketches of this kind may easily be made after any print is published."

"Sir," returned Jack, feeling quite hot at the imputation, "this sketch was made months ago. I was with her when she did it in the British Museum, and this is that very acanthus leaf which is in the finished print, only this is copied from an old marble. Indeed, sir, it is: and here's the something like the mouse's face which is in the original."

"That is not much to the purpose, my young friend," said Samuel Wells.

"With your permission, sir," said Mr. Aukland, "it is: allow him to finish what he was saying."

“I wish somebody would go with me to the British Museum,” said Jack, “and I would show them the very marble. Grace copied in the mouse’s face, because she said it must be right; and then, because I said I would set a trap to catch it, she said she would give it a flower to run behind; so she threw the ecrymocarpus across the leaf; but the little mouse peeps out still—and so it does in the printed muslin.”

“Very singular this!” said Mr. Aukland; “but this circumstance of the mouse’s face has been noticed before: it was pointed out to me by a young artist; and he recognized it to be copied from such a leaf in the British Museum.”

Jack made an exclamation of delight.

“Stay, sir,” said Mr. Aukland, very coolly; “this proves nothing. Du Roc himself, to whom I mentioned the circumstance, allowed that he also had copied it from this acanthus leaf.”

“I don’t believe he did, sir,” said Jack, earnestly.

“It would be worth thy while, friend Aukland,” said Mr. Wells, “to take both parties to the Museum, and see if both point out the same leaf.”

“I will search the matter to the bottom now, you may depend upon it,” replied Mr. Aukland.

It was accordingly arranged that Mr. Auk-

land should take Du Roc to the Museum the next morning, and that Grace and her brother should be there also—Mr. Wells having undertaken that Jack should have another leisure-day awarded him for so important a purpose.

“But what hast thou here?” said Mr. Wells, as they had risen to depart, putting his hand towards some designs for prints, which lay on a side-table.

“Designs for the next season,” said Aukland, keeping his hand upon them, as if unwilling that they should meet the eye of a rival calico-printer.

“I shall make no ungenerous use of them,” observed the Friend.

Mr. Aukland declared that he had not the least suspicion, and gave them into the other’s hand.

“These, or some of them at least,” remarked Mr. Wells, “will tend to substantiate this young woman’s claim.”

He then proceeded to tell that eleven other designs had been furnished by Grace at the same time with la belle Flora; and, as he had seen duplicates of them, he could now recognize them again. “But thou canst better point out thy sister’s designs,” said he, giving them to Jack.

“Yes,” said he, “this is one; and this, and this!”

“Very strange, indeed!” remarked Mr. Auk-

land, who was now beginning to let in doubts readily; "these were all given to me two weeks ago by Ferrand, as new designs by himself and Du Roc:—they have cost me a deal of money!"

"Eight of them are my sister's," said Jack.

"Thou wouldst like to see those duplicates?" observed Mr. Wells; "for here, at least, can be no collusion."

"Undoubtedly I should," returned he.

"I will send them to thee to-day," he replied; "I have them safely under lock and key: no one but Matthew Wilson and myself have seen them."

"I shall say nothing to Ferrand or Du Roc of my suspicion to-day," said Mr. Aukland; "I will have complete proof first."

"Thou art quite right," returned the other.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEW CONNEXIONS.

THE next morning Grace and her brother were punctually at the British Museum by ten o'clock. In about half an hour Mr. Aukland came, but Du Roc was not with him.

“This, sir,” said Grace, pausing before the fragment of a beautiful Corinthian capital, “is the marble, and this is the very acanthus leaf;” and, showing her first sketch at the same time, Mr. Aukland perceived the beautiful accuracy of the drawing. At that moment the young artist who had recognized the leaf at Mr. Aukland’s, and who was then copying an antique in the Museum, came up.

“Good morning, Mr. Aukland,” said he; “you are looking at the acanthus, I see—your belle Flora. Had I been the designer of that beautiful pattern, I would have called it the acanthus.”

“So she did!” exclaimed Jack, involuntarily; “that was the very name that Grace gave to this pattern!”

“It was written on the back of my design, sir,” said Grace, blushing deeply; “and, if you will be so very good as to look, you will see it written there.”

“Unless it has been scratched off,” said Jack.

“I expect Du Roc every moment,” observed Mr. Aukland, who was beginning to be quite interested in these young people. “You have satisfied me so far; walk on, if you please.”

The young student joined them, for he immediately concluded this to be the young person of whom he had heard so unfavourable a report at

Mrs. Aukland's, but whose appearance and manner interested him deeply. Jack told him, in a few words, the true history of la belle Flora, and the young artist was more interested than ever.

"I was sure," said he, "that that beautiful embroidery and la belle Flora were designed by the same hand."

After Mr. Aukland's patience was completely exhausted, Du Roc made his appearance. He had the paper, which he professed to be his drawing, in his hand, as he had been told to bring it with him; and he was evidently most anxiously prying about for some acanthus which might suit it.

"This, perhaps, is it," said Mr. Aukland, stopping before a broken capital, whose leaves bore no resemblance whatever to it.

"Ah! yes—the very one!" replied Du Roc, hoping that any might do: "your apprehension was much quicker than mine; this is it!"

"But where is the mouse's face, of which I hear so much?" demanded Mr. Aukland.

"Oh, that was one little fancy of my own," replied the Frenchman.

"But," said Mr. Aukland, "artists tell me it is very conspicuous in the original."

Du Roc protested that it was there, and, with the help of fancy, was plainly to be seen.

"That will do," said Mr. Aukland, now com

pletely convinced; "you may go about your business!"

Du Roc bowed low; and, not suspecting the trap into which he had fallen, adjourned to a tavern for a day's carouse.

Mr. Aukland examined the back of the paper which Du Roc had left with him, but no writing appeared upon it.

"Let me see," said the young artist, when this deficiency was pointed out; and, holding it between his eye and the light, a very careful erasure with the knife was discernible, over which the words *la belle Flora* had been coarsely written.

Mr. Aukland was a man of strong impulses, and a violent re-action now took place in his feelings. He parted with the brother and sister in the most cordial manner, and declared that ample justice should be done them.

How joyful was their return home, our readers may conceive; and Jack was despatched with the news of their successful visit to the Museum, to good Mr. Wells, to whom they thought it would give great pleasure.

"I am obliged to thee, my young friend," said Samuel Wells, when Jack had finished his relation; "thou didst me justice in supposing me interested in your welfare; and John Aukland,

I told thee, was an upright man;—thy sister will find herself in good hands. But my partner," said he, turning round, with a bustling air, "wishes to see thy sister on business. Bid friend Wilson step here," said he to a clerk, who was passing at that moment.

Mr. John Wilson, Mr. Wells's partner, appeared: he was a much younger man than either his brother or partner, and belonged altogether to a more modern school.

"This is our young friend Walsingham," said Samuel Wells: "he tells me that they have completely proved their claim to the new pattern."

"Aukland will rid himself of his man Ferrand, I should think, now," returned Mr. John Wilson. Samuel Wells thought also, that, without doubt, he would. "But," said he to his partner, "thou hadst better accompany this youth home, and arrange that little business with his sister."

Jack hoped they were not going to return the designs; and, as Mr. John Wilson declared himself ready to go at that moment, he sounded him by the way, as to his opinion of them: but Mr. John Wilson was a close man of business, and not even Jack could extract the shadow of an opinion from him.

It seemed a very formidable thing to Grace, to

be shut up in a room with this methodical man of business, who introduced the occasion of his call with as much precision as he made his entries in his ledger; and she proposed, therefore, that her mother should be admitted to their conference. Mr. John Wilson quite approved. He had called, he said, to purchase the twelve designs which had been brought to him the other day; but, in the first place, he must inquire if they had been seen by, or had been offered to any other house. They had been seen by no one but themselves and her own family, Grace replied. "They were willing, then," said Mr. John Wilson, "to give fifty guineas for them: would that sum satisfy her?" "Yes, indeed it would!" replied poor Grace, to whom the idea of possessing fifty guineas of her own, seemed incredible. An important-looking stamped paper, partly printed, and partly filled up, was then produced, for her to sign, which consigned over all her right and title in those patterns to the house of Wells and Wilson. Grace wrote her name very tremulously—it seemed to her altogether like a dream: and when the fifty-two gold sovereigns and a half were counted out before her, the room seemed to turn round. She had been a poor, penniless girl but a day before; she had now signed over mere traces of her pen, which,

like actual houses and land, had produced golden coin of the realm!

Her mother, and Mr. John Wilson, seemed to be talking very amicably, and Grace was roused out of her revery by her mother's voice. "Grace, my love, Mr. Wilson speaks to you!" Grace started, and apologized.

"He and his partner," he said, "would be extremely glad to engage her as a designer of patterns for the next twelve months, at least." Grace looked at her mother, as if doubtful of her approbation. "Certainly, my dear," replied her mother, "if you would like the occupation." Grace then thanked Mr. John Wilson, and said she should be most happy. Again, he had a stamped, printed paper in readiness; and, supplying the blanks as he went on, he read to the purport, that she engaged to furnish, during the next twelve months, for the firm of Wells and Wilson, original designs, solely ~~and~~ exclusively for their use; and for which designs she should receive one hundred and fifty guineas: that during the term of her engagement with them, she should not furnish any design, or designs whatsoever, to any other similar house, nor suffer any of her designs to be seen by them.

Mrs. Walsingham said, their restrictions were

perfectly reasonable, and she was sure her daughter would be satisfied with the terms. Grace also expressed her thanks. "We may then fill up this agreement," said Mr. John Wilson; and while he was so doing, the mother and daughter exchanged glances perfectly intelligible, though poor Grace's eyes were glistening with tears.

"We shall need two witnesses," said Mr. John Wilson; and the very formality of all this repelled Grace's emotion, and she again wondered to find herself a person of so much importance.

No sooner was Mr. John Wilson out of the house, than Jack's arms were round Grace's neck, and he was kissing her cheeks and forehead; for he saw the gold which lay on the table, and his delight was too great to satisfy itself in mere words.

"I shall just finish that set of handkerchiefs for Mrs Spenser," said Grace, after the first flush of their happy talk was over, "and then, dearest mother, you must excuse me doing any more fine work."

"My dear girl," replied her mother, "why should you?"

"How kind you are," was Grace's reply; and then Jack began to tell how Grace, for all these years, had done that sort of work without com-



plaining, although it was so hateful to her; and how she would like, of all things, to be an engraver; and what schemes they two had had together, but how Grace had determined never to desert her mother till she could obtain more money some other way.

“The Almighty has blessed you, my dear children,” said Mrs. Walsingham, deeply moved; and, kissing them both, she thanked God for having given her his choicest blessings of life, even in the midst of poverty—virtuous children.

Jack returned to his school, and Grace sate down to write a long letter to her brother and sister, which she hoped might reach them before William left Paris. While she was in the very middle of it, Mr. Aukland was announced. What a cheerful, cordial man he then seemed! He shook hands with Grace and her mother, and, as if he had been an old acquaintance, sate down in a fireside chair. He had not dismissed Ferrand, he said, for he was reserving that till he had confronted him on the morrow with Du Roc; but he had discovered one or two facts since morning, that had further convinced him of his utterly base character. Mrs. Aukland, however, was so wrapped up in Ferrand’s wife, who had been her maid, that he should have some trouble to get rid of

them; but at this moment, he said, he was come to make what reparation lay in his power. He had paid, he said, already largely for la belle Flora, but that was no reason why the real author should go unrewarded—he would offer her *fifty pounds*. Grace started, and even Mrs. Walsingham said it was a large sum. Mr. Aukland had his purse in his hand, when Grace, springing up, exclaimed, “No, Mr. Aukland, I will not receive the money. It is enough for me that my favourite design has been successful, and that you acknowledge my right to it. The very charm of that pattern would be gone, sir, if I received its price in money!”

“But, my dear young lady,” argued Mr. Aukland, “this money you must receive as payment for the eleven other designs—all of which I now possess.”

“Sir,” said Grace, “it is quite too much. It will be the second fifty I have received to-day.”

“Indeed!” returned Mr. Aukland, with an expression of surprise.

“I received fifty,” continued Grace, “from Mr. John Wilson.”

“What!” said Mr. Aukland, “have you engaged yourself to him?”

“I have, sir,” replied Grace, “for the next twelve months.”

